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A lot of people are born with odd talents, but they never use them, and eventually the gifts shrivel up and fall away, like an apple left on the tree too long.
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The Red Wyvern

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WITCHES' BREW

BY STEVE JOHNSON

A watched plot

Artwork by George Vrbanic
Cartography by Diesel

Steve wanted to create a town with its own unique history, and townsfolk whose personalities and background made them "come alive." The plot for "Witches' Brew" stemmed from an October Halloween movie marathon.

"Witches' Brew" is an AD&D® FORGOTTEN REALMS® adventure for 6–8 characters of levels 3–5 (about 20 total levels). It is set in the High Forest region but can be adapted to virtually any campaign world. A good mix of character classes is recommended, and rangers and druids would come in handy. The adventure includes a fully detailed town that can be used by the DM as a launching base for further adventures.

Some spells included in this adventure are taken from *The Complete Wizard's Handbook* (*CWH*), the *Tome of Magic* (*ToM*) and *FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventures* (*FRA*). These resources are not absolutely necessary, and the DM should feel free to substitute other spells if he so chooses.

For the DM

This adventure is centered around a sleepy little town called Woody Glen, located just inside the northwestern border of the High Forest near the Lost Peaks and the River Dessarin. Though isolated, the town is home to many skilled laborers and craftsmen whose reputation for quality has spread throughout the North. Through courage and determination they have built a thriving community in the great wilderness. But what makes Woody Glen unique is that it is the only area in the entire region where several rare and extremely valuable species of plant life flourish. Many of these plants are prized by mages as potent magical components for both spells and magical items. Such is the demand for these powerful plants that wizards are willing to pay high prices to anyone who can procure them.

Kamen, a 10th-level mage from Yartar, has a great need for the following ingredients found only in the Woody Glen area: root of shrieking mandrake, deadly nightshade, baneberry, and black peat bog tar. Kamen believes these ingredients will enable him to create several

elixirs of health and potions of *plant control*. Kamen needs the *elixirs of health* to heal an aging sage friend. The potion of *plant control* he plans to sell to a wealthy merchant who is having trouble with an infestation of giant sundew plants along one of his most lucrative caravan routes. As he is far too busy to go himself, Kamen has placed a notice for adventurers. He is willing to pay each character 500 gp and all expenses (up to a maximum of 1,000 gp) if they can harvest the plants for him. He also provides directions to the town and a wagon with a team of two horses for hauling back the cargo. The wagon holds the various barrels, baskets, and casks necessary to contain the ingredients.

All this might sound too easy for the characters. It isn't. They must journey to Woody Glen, search for the rare plants, and complete the complex and often dangerous harvesting procedures. These are not ordinary plants: many do not want to be harvested and fight back vigorously. Kamen makes the PCs fully aware of this danger and gives them detailed instructions for completing the tasks.

The adjacent handout describes the harvesting procedures in detail and should be given to players.

What the PCs do not know is that a troublesome witch named Morda has recently moved into the Woody Glen vicinity. Morda is also seeking magical ingredients, but she uses them to make poison brews and other nasty concoctions. She revels in causing mischief and plans to harass the townsfolk unless they pay her a monthly tribute of 50 gp and provide all the ingredients and supplies she needs for her witchcraft.

For now, Morda is keeping her presence a secret, but once she's settled and gains the upper hand, she reveals herself and makes her demands. She has built her lair in the forested hills a mile north of the town and has just begun to set her plans into motion when the PCs arrive. Morda is equipped with an impressive array of items, powers, and allies. When she learns of the PCs' presence, she does her utmost to get rid of them. Her followers include her black cat familiar Scratch, 20 crazed goblins, and an aged but spiteful quickwood by the name of Badbark.

Seek and ye shall find–

Baneberries: Found on the slender stalks of mutant strains of aquatic white heather and cinquefoil, baneberries have been extolled by the sage, and I am quite excited at the prospect of inspecting them. Rumors of some danger regarding the harvesting of baneberries persist, but I have seen no evidence of this problem. Please use your own discretion. I need at least two bushels of baneberries. These are not likely to keep for longer than a week, so once you procure them, make haste to gather the other ingredients and return to Yartar quickly.

Black peat bog tar: Invaluable to alchemists, black peat bog tar must be gathered only under a full moon. This should not present a problem, as the next full moon should be in nine days. If you leave for Woody Glen tomorrow, you should arrive in six days, leaving three days to find and gather the tar. Collect the tar by digging a hole through the top layer of firm peat, then descend down through the brackish water to the tar bottom. As peat bogs can be treacherous, beware of falling through. Please gather three barrels.

Root of shrieking mandrake: Dig for mandrake near the roots of large trees on the edge of the forest. So rare is this root that you must employ the keenest of bloodhounds to sniff it out. Beware, for the plant is not defenseless. When disturbed, mandrake emits a piercing shriek that permanently deafens listeners and drives animals into fits of savage, berserk frenzy. My sage friend estimates the root will shriek for no more than 30 minutes, but I strongly recommend you and any hounds used in the hunt employ some form of ear protection in this endeavor. Please return with no less than five pounds of mandrake (20 roots should be sufficient).

Deadly nightshade: Though known as a powerful poison and often used in obscure necromantic rituals, I assure you my interest in this plant is benign. Deadly nightshade is extremely toxic to the touch. It also must be harvested in absolute darkness at night. Not even a single ray of moonlight may be present, or the plant loses all its inherent magical properties. Thick, protective gloves are a necessity, but as to the absolute darkness, I leave the solution up to you. Look for nightshade in old cemeteries. The locals might be able to direct you to the proper locations, as I understand this region of the High Forest has a fair share of ruins beneath its sheltering roof of leaves. I require one full bushel.

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Magical Component Table

The following table shows the magical components the PCs must acquire, whom they must question in town to find them, and where the components are located.

Component:	NPC & Building #	Location of Component:
Baneberries	Mar Hampton (area **6**)	Brook Pond Island (see Chapter Three)
Black peat bog tar	Jack Spry (area **20**)	Peat Bog (see Chapter Four)
Root of shrieking mandrake	Blarney Allen (area **8**)	Anywhere near the edge of the forest (see Chapter Five)
Deadly nightshade	Bibb Swiftwillow (area **7**) or Father Turghan (area **24**)	Sebastian Manor (see Chapter Six)

The DM should see Chapter Seven: The Witch's Lair for the abilities of Morda and her followers.

Chapter One: The Journey to Woody Glen

Assuming the PCs meet Kamen in Yartar, it should take them six days to reach Woody Glen. They must travel east from the city along the road toward Everlund, making a turn to the south toward Dead Horse Ford along the River Dessarin. There they should turn east along a narrow and seldom-used road called the Olde Road that leads into the High Forest and eventually to the foothills of the Lost Peaks, where they will find the town nestled in a lush, wooded valley.

As they descend into the valley, the trees gradually recede to reveal a splendid view of beautiful countryside. Large fields of golden wheat, barley, and corn run up and down gentle slopes of land. Small, sparkling streams and ponds dot the landscape here and there. Several quaint farmsteads come into view as the party travels down to the far end of the valley and the town.

Overview of the Valley

A. Whisper Run. This small sparkling stream runs down from the mountains of the Lost Peaks where it eventually empties into Frog Pond.

B. Peat Bog. This large bog is covered with thick vegetation. Peat bogs are dangerous because victims might fall through the surface and drown. Black peat bog tar can be found here in the muck on the bottom. See Chapter Four for details and encounters.

C. Frog Pond. Only three or four feet deep, this pond earns its name from the many frogs and other amphibians that live here.

D. Brook Pond. Baneberries can be found growing on aquatic white heather and cinquefoil in the reed beds around the island. Some of these plants have mutated into strangleweed. See Chapter Three for details.

E. Falling Rock River. Really more of a large stream than a river, this ribbon of water runs down from the Lost Peaks and carves through the steep and unstable rock, hence its name. It empties into Brook Pond.

F. Watermill. This mill is owned and run by Alowicious Farntree, who is also the chairman of the town council.

G. Windmill. Designed and built by Alowicious Farntree, this structure sits atop a small hillock south of the town.

H. Town. This is the town of Woody Glen. See Chapter Two for details.

I. Shrine. This modest shrine is tended by the acolytes of the House of Sun and Earth, a church devoted to Lathander and Chauntea. Leaving offerings here is rumored to guarantee good crops and good health.

J. Silver Mine. The road leading up to this abandoned silver mine has been virtually swallowed up by vegetation and forest growth. The mine itself is partially collapsed and very dangerous. Most people have forgotten the mine is even there.

K. Jack Spry's Cabin. This small residence belongs to a ranger who sometimes works in town as the postman. He is also a trapper. The cabin was recently damaged by vandals (actually Morda's goblins). Fish skeletons are scattered everywhere.

L. Sebastian Manor. Long ago this huge, abandoned house was the magnificent home of the rich and demented Sebastian family. Now it is a decaying relic. Deadly nightshade might be found here in the old family cemetery. See Chapter Six for details.

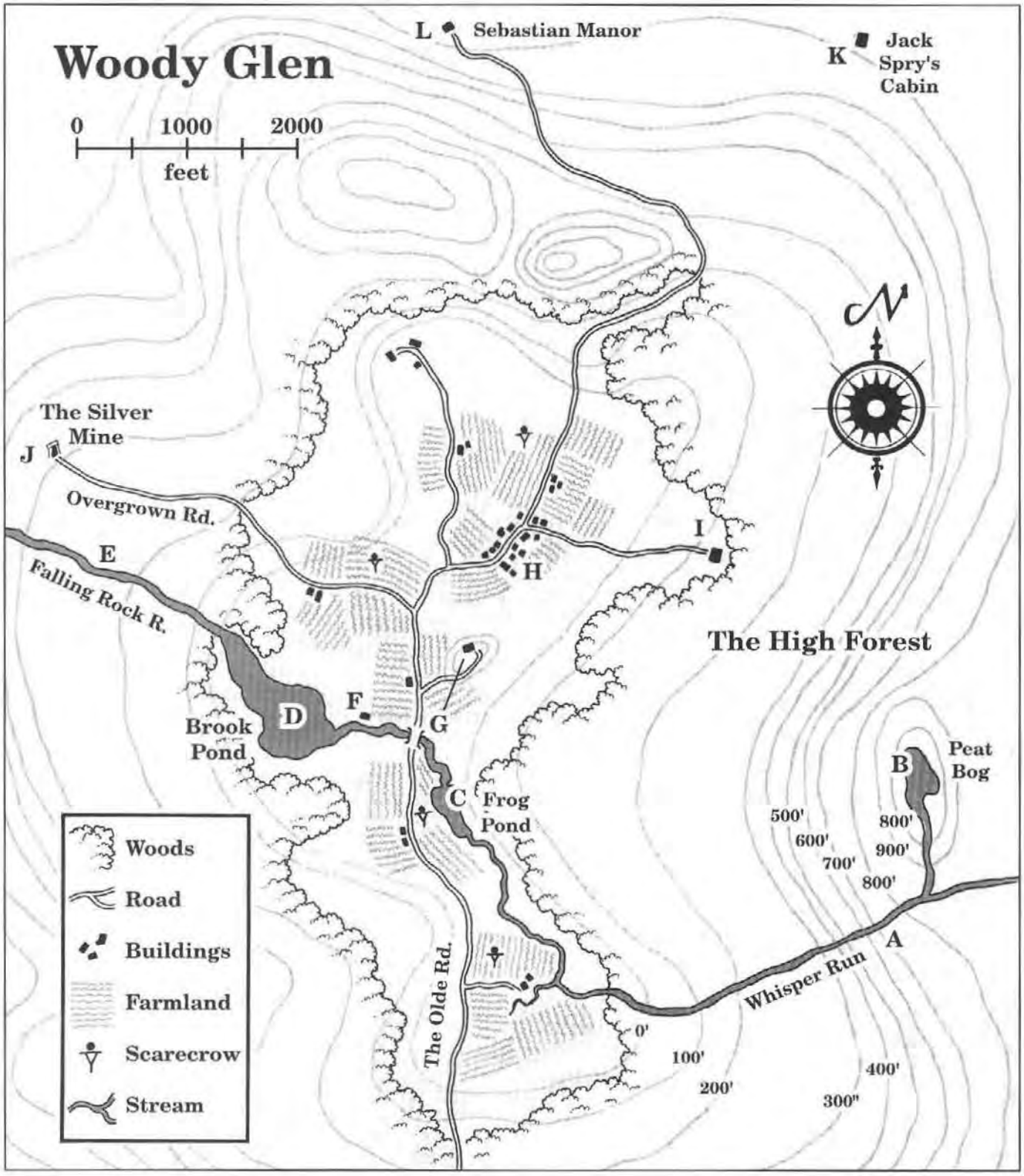
Chapter Two: The Town

Surrounded by gently rolling hills and the High Forest, Woody Glen is a small village consisting of many stone and wood buildings. It was a silver boom-town nearly 200 years ago, but when the silver ran out most of the miners left. Now it's a farming town. The residents regard those looking for magical ingredients with amusement and curiosity and have come to call them "plant hunters." As of yet, none of the townsfolk have decided to make a business out of it.

Woody Glen is mostly inhabited by humans, but it has its fair share of halflings and half-elves with a sprinkling of dwarves and gnomes. While most folk are 0-level with skills appropriate to their professions, a few are fighters of 1st–3rd level.

Arrival

When the PCs arrive in town, they may seek lodging at the local inn, Cole's Grapevine. The inn is well known for its excellent food and comfortable accommodations, and it is the favorite hang-out of many of the town's noteworthy NPCs (see Cole's


Woody Glen
0
1000
2000
feet
L
Sebastian Manor
K
Jack Spry's Cabin
N
The Silver Mine
J
Overgrown Rd.
E
Falling Rock R.
I
H
The High Forest
Brook Pond
D
F
G
B
Peat Bog
C
Frog Pond
500'
600'
700'
800'
800'
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A
Whisper Run
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Woods
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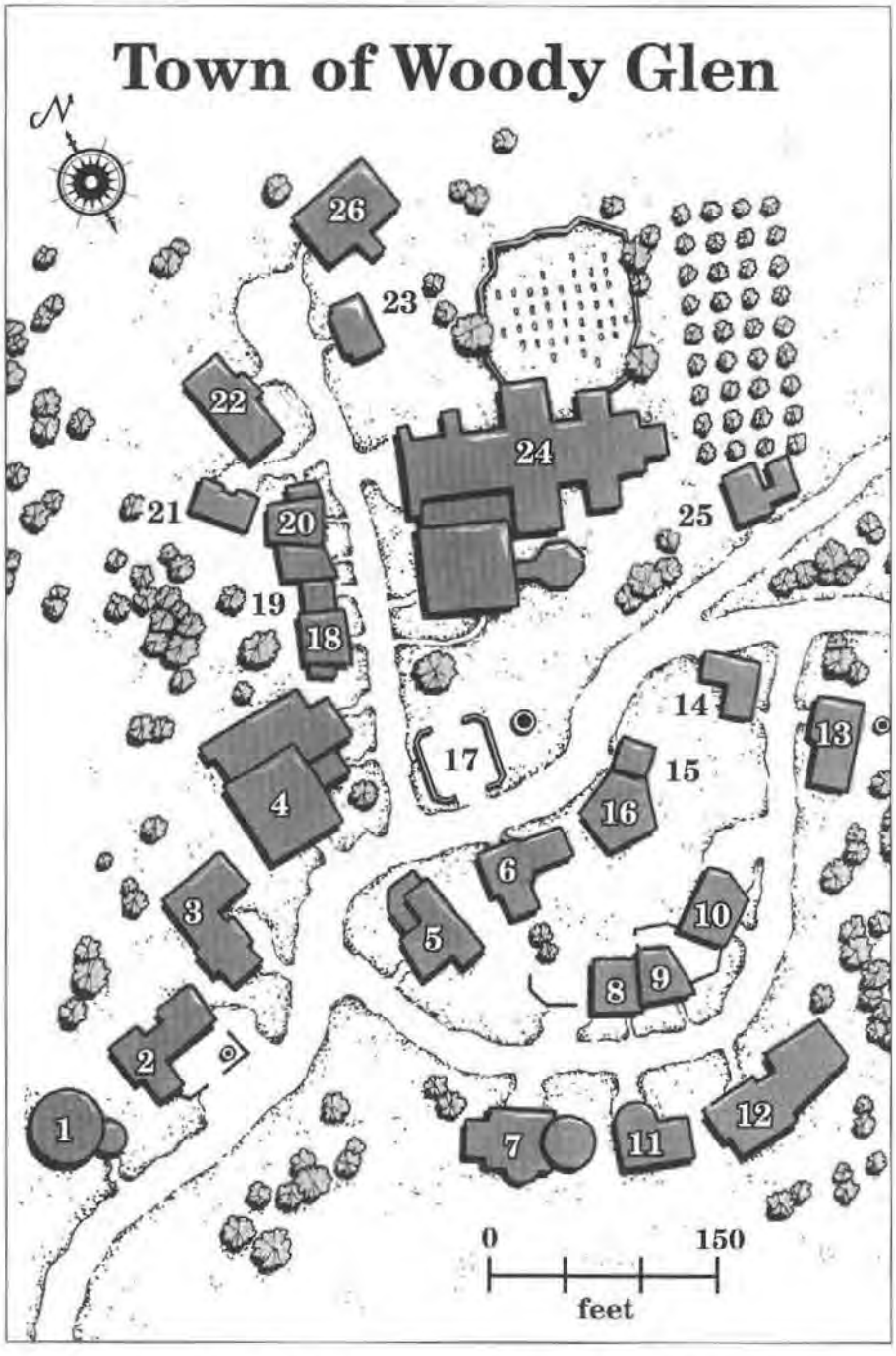


Grapevine, area **4** in the "Key to Woody Glen" section). The characters should find the inn well to their liking and the owner both friendly and helpful.

The PCs should soon start looking for information on the whereabouts of the magical ingredients. The townsfolk don't know anything about the ingredients themselves, but if the PCs describe what kind of terrain they are likely to be found in, the locals may be able to help. Mar Hampton, the baker (area **6**) can tell them that he has seen white heather and cinquefoil growing in the reed beds around the island in Brook Pond. (See Chapter Three.) He suggests that baneberries might grow there.

Key to Woody Glen

1. Watch Tower. Located on a man-made earthen berm about 20' high, this stone tower is 40' tall and slowly succumbing to old age. Moss and vines cling to its walls, and it has developed a slight tilt. It is still solid, however, and is used as a lookout post and jail. It is usually inhabited by three town militiamen who are 1st-level fighters armed with broad swords and equipped with scale mail and shields. They often double as firemen.

Militia men (3): AL LG; AC 5; MV 9; F1; hp 8 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 10; scale mail, shield, broad sword.

2. The Oak & Hammer. Dav Shean, a carpenter and smith, lives here. Dav is a half-elf and the official sergeant of the town militia. He is an excellent horseman and a good swordsman. Dav helped Alowicious Farntree build his windmill, and he makes some of the finest weapons around. Any weapon or armor fashioned by Dav has a 50% chance of being such high quality that it receives a non-magical +1 bonus to hit. The price for quality weapons are four times higher than those listed in the *PHB*. Since there is hardly ever any trouble in Woody Glen, he spends most of his time tending his shop and very little time training the militia. He is clever, honest, quick, and hardy.

Dav Shean (3rd-level half-elf fighter): AL LG; AC 3; MV 9; F3; hp 22; THAC0 16; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; SD 30% resistant to *charm* spells; S 18/21 (+1/+3), D 16, C 15, I 13, W 13, Ch 12; ML 12; scale mail, long sword (specialized).

3. Stables. These stables are owned and run by the Ashford family, who have a real passion for horses of all kinds. They keep the stables and all their horses in excellent condition, and they even offer to train mounts for a fee, the amount depending on the trick desired. DMs should consult the Horse Quality chart in the *DMG* to see whether any of the horses for sale are high-spirited or chargers. Most of these horses have interesting traits, and none of them are nags. Good quality steeds can be bought for about the same price as those listed

in the *PHB*. Exceptional horses cost two to four times more than normal. Travelers may stable their horses here for 3 gp per day.

4. Cole's Grapevine. Cole Keegan is the owner of this large two-story building. He is cheerful, robust, large, and stocky.

Cole Keegan (1st-level human fighter): AL LG; AC 8; MV 9; F1; hp 9; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 14, C 14, I 12, W 12, Ch 15; ML 11; leather armor, short sword.

The Grapevine is the favorite hang-out of the townsfolk and much gossiping goes on here. It is exceptionally clean and comfortable, and it has excellent food. Rooms cost 5 gp per night. Ale is 6 sp a mug. Every night, the common room is filled with people socializing and drinking ale or Green Valley Stout. Cole is a cat lover and keeps nearly a dozen cats and kittens, both his own and any strays that show up. These cats roam the common room, begging for scraps and attention. (Scratch, Morda's familiar, can often be found here spying on things. No one suspects he is more than just another stray cat.)

Cole also has a unique item of which he is very proud. He has invented an icebox that he uses to store food so it will not spoil. The icebox is a large 4' × 6' bin in the cellar with two compartments holding small ice toads. He feeds and takes care of these creatures, and they keep the icebox cold. Cole captured the ice toads near Frog Pond just last winter, and they have become quite an attraction in town. This prolonged exposure to humans has made them very tame, and they no longer pose any threat to people. Cole offers the PCs the use of his icebox if they need it to store any components that might spoil over time, such as baneberries.

The inn is a valuable source of information throughout the adventure, since many of the NPCs who know the locations of the magical plants can be found here.

Rumors are floating around when the PCs arrive. These are usually false, though they might have some truth to them. In general, those that are true (marked with a "T") are the result of one of Morda's tricks. Refer to the "Rumors" sidebar.

Bibb Swiftwillow (area **7**) and Jack Spry (area **20**) can be found at the inn almost every night, along with a few other notable townsfolk. If the PCs mention to anyone that they are looking for magical plants, they are directed to one of these individuals. Other townsfolk who can help PCs find the plants include Mar the baker (area **6**) and Blarney the sheep herder (area **8**).

5. Rory's General Store & Haberdashery. Rory Twigham, a gnome, is the proprietor of this tidy establishment. Just about anything the characters need in the way of tools and equipment can be bought here at prices comparable to those found in the *PHB*.

Rory Twigham (gnome): AL LG; AC 8; MV 6; 0-level; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 8; knife.

6. Hampton Bakers & Butchery. Mar and Aesa Hampton live and work here. The scents of their fine cooking are noticeable from a fair distance away, and passers-by are often drawn to their shop. Mar's culinary delights must be tasted to be believed. His pastries delight Bibb Swiftwillow, and his mincemeat pie is a town favorite. Mar often walks the valley picking berries and gathering nuts. He can tell the PCs that he has seen white heather and cinquefoil growing on the edge of the island in Brook Pond. Mar is fat and jolly, and he loves to sing. His wife Aesa is an extraordinary cook, wise, bossy, and likeable. She is also a member of the Town Council.

Mar and **Aesa Hampton** (humans): AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 5, 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; club.

Mar has a secret that no one but Aesa knows about. Long ago he befriended an elf in the High Forest. After sampling some of Mar's pastries and finding them delicious, the elf bestowed a gift upon the baker: a small, carved box with a single golden seed inside. Mar planted this seed just inside the forest where Falling Rock River empties into Brook Pond. One year later, the baker was astounded to find the seed had grown into a huge, beautiful apple tree. Pies or pastries made with apples from this tree have marvelous properties: they bestow upon the consumer excellent health, vigor, and long life (adding 1d20 years to one's life span). However, no more than 20 years can be added to a life, no matter how many pies are eaten. Needless to say, Mar's apple pies and pastries are very popular, although no one has figured out that they are magical or have any of the wondrous effects listed above. People know only that they are delicious and that eating the pies makes them feel good.

Rumors

1. "There's been an awful lot of thick fog this year. Real unusual for these parts." (T) *Morda has been casting* wall of fog *on the town through her* cauldron of brewing.

2. "I was up at the old Sebastian place poking around when I saw a ghost! It had three glowing eyes and went right through the walls!" (T) *This rumor comes from Bibb Swiftwillow. What he encountered was an illusion manifested by the poltergeist.*

3. "Seems nothing will keep of late. My milk soured, the wine turned to vinegar, and the well water tastes terrible. It's a bad omen, if you ask me." (T) *Morda has been casting* metamorphose liquids *in town.*

4. "I saw a walking plant last night! The thing was big, green, and slimy and covered with black gunk. I ran when it turned and looked at me." (F)

5. "Somebody bashed up Jack Spry's cabin in the foothills and left trails of half-eaten fish skeletons all over the place. Must've been that no-good Blarney Allen and his deadbeat brothers!" (T) *Morda's goblins ransacked the cabin to scare away Jack; Morda fears he might use his tracking skills to find her lair. The fish skeletons were the leftovers of the goblins' meals. Blarney Allen and his brothers had nothing to do with any of this.*

6. "I don't know if it's real safe to go traipsing around the woods these days. There are an awful lot of real big bears out there who missed hibernation last year, and they're real put off about it!" (F)

Tainted Ale Effects Table (Area 7)

1d8	Effect	Duration
1	*Plant growth*, 5' radius	1 turn
2	*Haste* (self only)	1 turn
3	50% magic resistance	1d4 hours
4	*Charm person* on first person seen	1 day
5	Anything touched glows, 5' radius	1d4 hours
6	*Confusion* (self only)	1d4 rounds
7	Imbiber grows 2d8 inches	1 day
8	Imbiber cannot tell a lie	1 day

7. Guine & Swiftwillow, Brewers. The sign also reads, "Home of Green Valley Stout & Bull's Head Lager." The owners are a dwarf, Brahm Guine, and a halfling, Bibb Swiftwillow. These two run the brewery and created the two brews named on the sign. Green Valley Stout and Bull's Head Lager are famous throughout the middle regions of the North, and any dwarf, gnome, or halfling character has a 50% chance of having heard of them. The beer is considered some of the finest stuff around. Brahm and Bibb are extremely proud of their little brewery and give free samples to anyone who asks.

Bibb is merry, loves beer and food, and is known as the town's practical joker. No one knows that he used to be a jewel thief from Yartar, now retired and enjoying a peaceful trade. He once tried to explore the haunted Sebastian Manor but fled in fear from its ghostly inhabitants. He has seen deadly nightshade growing in the Sebastian family cemetery and tells the PCs if they ask about it.

Bibb Swiftwillow (3rd-level halfling thief): AL CN with good tendencies; AC 5; MV 6; T3; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 12, D 17, C 12, I 14, W 9, Ch 14; ML 9; leather armor, dagger.

Brahm Guine (dwarf): AL LG; AC 10; 0-level; hp 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 11; club.

Brahm and Bibb employ four workers in the brewery and hire others when they need them. Tully, the town wanderer, occasionally works here and is unknowingly responsible for magically altering some of the beer batches. (Tully is unaware that he is a gifted wild mage. See his description in area **16** for more details). Anyone drinking Green Valley Stout or Bull's Head Lager obtained from anywhere in Woody Glen has a 20% chance of gaining one of the temporary effects described in the above sidebar.

The chances of getting an altered beer from Woody Glen are applicable only for three days after the party arrives in town. After that, all of the altered batches will have been either drunk by the townsfolk or shipped off to Yartar for distribution. During these three days, there is a 75% chance that 1d4 of the townsfolk, chosen at random, experience one of the noted effects. Needless to say, if one of the effects is immediately obvious (such as *plant growth, confusion,* or glow touch), news of the event spreads quickly through the town.

8. Allen's Shearing & Skinning. Blarney Allen and his three brothers do their shearing and skinning in this building. From here the wool and mutton are sold or shipped to other towns. Blarney is big, loud, and rude. He lives in a shack at the northwest end of the valley where he keeps his sheep. Blarney does odd jobs, herds sheep, and likes to hunt with his dogs. Everybody in town knows Blarney's dogs are the best bloodhounds and can refer the PCs to him if they are looking for root of shrieking mandrake. Blarney can be found every night at The Bull's Horns tavern (area **12**). He is a devoted fan of Bull's Head Lager and denounces anyone who drinks any other brand, especially "that sissy Green Valley stuff."

Blarney Allen (human): AL CN; AC 8; MV 12; 0-level; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; dagger.

9. Warehouse. This place is usually rented out for storage. It is currently empty.

10. Shipping and Wagoneers. Wagons can be bought here for 10 gp. Packages can also be shipped to Yartar or Triboar for 1 sp per pound of weight.

11. Cheesemaker. This shop is filled with various wheels of cheese.

12. The Bull's Horns. This tavern is cheap but not excessively clean. It is home to a slightly rougher crowd than is found over at Cole's Grapevine, and barroom brawls are not uncommon, especially when Blarney Allen is around. This is Blarney's favorite hang-out, and he can be found here nightly drinking with his brothers and their rowdy friends. Everyone here usually drinks Bull's Head Beer or strong dwarven liquor like the infamous Citadel Adbar 'Shroom Squeezins. Blarney or one of his friends is likely to pick a fight with anyone who orders Green Valley Stout or wine of any kind, as these are "sissy drinks."

13. Residence. Alowicious Farntree, local miller and chairman of the town council, lives here. This residence is a two-story affair and the nicest house in town. He owns the local watermill and the windmill, the only one of its kind throughout the North. The windmill is Alowicious' own invention, and he is very proud of it. It is a marvel that he spends hours discussing with anyone willing to listen. Alowicious is courteous but rather stuffy and business-like. Alowicious can usually be found here only at night, as he spends his days working in the Town Hall or checking up on his businesses.

Alowicious Farntree (human): AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; ML 11; unarmed.

14. Residence. The orchard owner (see area **25**) lives here.

15. Leatherwork, Tanning, and Shoemaking. This shop sells leather goods of all kinds at prices comparable to those listed in the *PHB*.

16. Boarding House. Tully, a wanderer and occasional field-hand for local farmers, lives here. Tully is available as a porter or assistant if the party needs one. He asks for 5 sp per day. Well-meaning but clumsy, Tully doesn't know that he is a gifted wild mage. He unconsciously casts spells when excited or frustrated. He does not need to learn or memorize spells to cast them. Additionally, there are no components, gestures, or other outward signs that Tully is the cause of the spells. These spells are never harmful in effect unless Tully is in danger or afraid of something. Tully shrugs off the peculiar happenings as freak occurrences. He is regarded by other townsfolk as either an idiot, a genius, or sometimes a little of both. In any case, he is well liked, and any accidents he causes are usually tolerated. Typical spell effects that Tully may inadvertently cause include *Hornung's guess, Nahal's reckless dweomer, pattern-weave, alternate reality,* and *Hornung's baneful deflector.* (Note: wild mages and their spells are detailed in the *ToM*. If the DM does not have access to these spells, he should replace them with the following: *ESP, phantasmal force, Nystul's magical aura, erase,* and *shield.*)

Tully (4th-level human wild mage): AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; W4; hp 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 14, D 8, C 13, I 17, W 7, Ch 13; ML 7; dagger.

17. Town Square. This is where all town festivals, dances, and joyous meetings take place. It is a tiled stone square surrounded by a low, white marble wall for sitting on. Colored lanterns are placed at each corner.

18. Mason/Glassblower Shop. The owners of this shop specialize in fine stonework and glassware.

19. Tailor & Drapery. Good clothing and fine cloths are made here.

20. Post Office/Parchment Makers. Three people work here making parchment and occasionally sorting what little mail comes and goes to and from Woody Glen. Jack Spry—a trapper, postman, and volunteer militia man—can be found here 25% of the time; otherwise, he is out exploring the High Forest or fixing up his cabin in the hills northeast of town. He doesn't know who vandalized his home, but he will help the PCs if they can help him find the perpetrators. He knows the area within five miles of town very well and can tell the party where to find the peat bog to the east. Since he gets out more than the others, Jack functions as the postman, bringing letters and news from far-away places. He is quiet, capable, and independent.

Jack Spry (3rd-level human ranger): AL CG; AC 6; MV 9; R3; hp 18; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17 (+1/+1), D 16, C 15, I 12, W 15, Ch 12; ML 12; leather armor, long sword, composite short bow, dagger.

21. Minda's Rooms for Rent. Minda Argenmuir rents comfortable rooms for a lease period of no less than six months, charging 10 gp per month. This includes board.

22. Town Hall. The town meeting hall also serves as the council headquarters.

23. Rectory. These quarters serve Father Turghan and his acolytes (see area **24** below).

24. The House of Sun and Earth. This building houses the churches of Chauntea (agriculture) and Lathander (dawn and renewal). Father Turghan is the high priest of the church and the spiritual leader of Woody Glen. He and several acolytes conduct weekly services and provide healing to the sick and injured. They also tend a small shrine to Chauntea on the east side of the valley. Many farmers attribute the church's influence to the success of their harvests. Holy water is given freely to good priests. Otherwise, the cost is 30 gp per vial. Father Turghan is a large balding man known for his kindness and piety. He is quick to anger with wrong-doers, however, and wields his stout cudgel fiercely. He is also a skilled herbalist.

Father Turghan (3rd-level human priest): AL LG; AC 7; MV 9; P3; hp 20; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 10, C 15, I 12, W 17, Ch 15; ML 14; studded leather armor, club. Spells: *bless, command, cure light wounds, shillelagh, chant, know alignment, slow poison.* He also possesses a scroll with the following spells on it: *cure light wounds* (×2), *goodberry, magical vestment,* and *cure disease* (×3).

Father Turghan can help the PCs find deadly nightshade, if they ask. He knows that there is an old cemetery near Sebastian Manor where the PCs might find some. If they ask about the church's private cemetery, the Father tells the PCs that he does not think there are any of the deadly plants growing there. He adds that even if there were, it would not be respectful to the dead to go poking around their graves and so, unfortunately, he must ask the PCs not to look there.

25. Orchard House. Jake Cullin and his family tend the trees in this orchard. They raise apple, mulberry, and walnut trees. Good apple cider is made here as well.

26. Grain Barn. This large barn is owned by Thom Gray. He is a local farmer who owns the largest farmstead in the valley, down in the southeast end. Thom rents the barn to other local farmers and is also in charge of keeping the nearby town grain bins in good shape. He is a member of the town council. A good hunter and the best archer in town, Thom is friendly, practical, and cool-headed. He is more familiar with the forest than anyone else except for his ranger friend, Jack Spry. Thom volunteers as a town militia man when needed.

Thom Gray (2nd-level human fighter): AL NG; AC 5; MV 9; F2; hp 12; THAC0 17, 14 with bow; #AT 1 (2 with bow); Dmg by weapon type; S 15, D 16, C 13, I 12, W 14, Ch 14; ML 11; studded leather armor, dagger, longbow (specialized; +1 to hit), 12 flight arrows.

Chapter Three: Brook Pond

After the PCs have talked to Mar Hampton and determined that the location of baneberries must be the island in Brook Pond, they should set out. Before they go, though, they might wish to purchase two baskets from Rory's General Store (area **5**) for 3 sp each to hold the two bushels of

baneberries that Kamen requires for his potions.

The pond is found in the southwest corner of the valley. It is about 1,000' long and as deep as 20 feet in the center. The island where the baneberries are found is about 100' off of the northern shore of the pond. Unless the PCs decide to swim, they will need a boat. The only one available is owned by Alowicious Farntree, and it is moored near his watermill. Alowicious grudgingly agrees to lend his boat to the PCs if they ask, but he doesn't seem happy about it. If asked what is bothering him, Alowicious informs the party that some local rascals must have stolen his boat a few days ago, because he found it drifting off shore near the island. It was banged up and filled with water and several gnawed fish skeletons. Since then he has decided to keep it firmly tied up when not in use. The PCs can use the boat, but they must agree to take good care of it.

The boat was stolen by Morda's goblins, who used it to row to the island. They camped out on the island, fished awhile, and then searched for baneberries. Finding none, they boarded the boat again and searched the reed beds. There they found somewhat more than they expected—the berries were growing on strangleweed. After an intense fight in the middle of the night, the boat suffered some damage from wildly swung goblin clubs. Driven off, the goblins were forced to row the boat back to shore and return to Morda empty-handed. Morda has since sent Scratch out in crow form to spy on the PCs to see whether they are able to succeed where her goblins could not.

If the party goes ashore to investigate the island, read the following description:

> The island is heavily overgrown with weeds and teems with insects of all kinds. Behind some bushes you come across a large circle of rocks. Inside it are the remains of a recent campsite, only a few days old. There are still ashes from a small bonfire here and a poorly written message scrawled in the dirt that reads, "DA BROOM BOYZ WAS HERE."

The crow is Scratch, watching every move the characters make and following them around from tree to tree. If molested, Scratch flies off but returns in 3d4 rounds.

The campsite was left by Morda's "moon goblins." One of them wrote the message with a stick, referring to his band as "Da Broom Boyz," named after Morda's *broom of flying*. The message was obviously written by someone who was barely literate, as many of the letters are scrawled backward. The campsite and message are the first clues indicating the presence of intruders in the Glen. The strange crow should also make the characters suspicious.

If the party investigates the reeds growing in the shallow water around the island, read the following:

> The water around the island here is shallow. High green reeds grow out of the water in thick clumps. Intermingled with them are the stalks of several cinquefoil and white heather plants, swaying gently. Hundreds of small red berries grow along their branches.

Characters who make a successful Intelligence check notice that while the cinquefoil and white heather are swaying, the reeds are not. In fact, there is no breeze. The swaying plants are mutated hybrids of strangleweed that wave their stalks in warning at anything venturing too close. They attack as soon as the boat or a swimming character comes within five feet. Wrapping their fronds around the PC or boat, they begin to squeeze with all their might.

Each round that the boat is attacked in this way, it must make a save vs. crushing blow at +1 (saves as thick wood). If it fails, the boat is ripped apart with a loud cracking noise, and it sinks. Characters wearing armor must remove it as soon as possible (see *DMG* for drowning rules). If the boat is not torn apart, it begins to take on water as the thrashing plants tilt its side down. The boat sinks after five rounds of such treatment. Characters fighting the strangleweed must make a Dexterity check each round or fall overboard due to the rocking and swaying of the boat.

Strangleweed (3): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 0; HD 2; hp 14 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1 hp of crushing damage per point of Strength difference (Strength 9 per frond; victim is held even if no damage is suffered); SA a hit entwines the victim who then attacks at –2 until freed (a victim stronger than the frond has a 10% chance to escape per point of Strength difference); SZ L (7' long); ML 9; XP 120; *MM*/293.

Once the plants are defeated, their baneberries can be gathered. There are more than enough berries to satisfy Kamen's needs.

When the PCs return to town, they become the object of great attention. Everyone wants to see the magic components they have gathered. The PCs are immediately ushered off to Cole's Grapevine to tell the story, and everyone offers to buy them a drink. That night there is a large gathering of people in the common room, and the PCs have an opportunity to speak with Jack Spry, who can tell them where to find the bog for tomorrow night's harvesting of black peat bog tar. (The tar must be collected under a full moon. If the PCs don't get the tar under tomorrow night's full moon, they will have to wait another month to try again, and their baneberries will spoil.) Jack tells them the bog is located about three-quarters of a mile southeast of town in the High Forest. It lies just past the rim of the valley on top of a steep hill and is fed by Whisper Run, a small stream that flows down into Frog Pond.

Chapter Four: The Peat Bog

The next day, the party has time to prepare for the night's harvesting of peat bog tar. They must buy three barrels from Rory's General Store to hold it all. These cost 2 gp each and weigh 30 pounds. Several buckets would also come in handy at 5 sp each. There is no road to the bog, so the PCs must carry the barrels on foot. The hill they must climb to get to the bog is very steep and rocky, and any character carrying one of the unwieldy barrels must make a Dexterity check or fall down the slope, suffering 1d6+1 hp damage.

Assuming they have followed Kamen's instructions, the characters arrive at the bog well after nightfall.

The moon is completely full and high in the sky.

> As you step out of the dark, thick woods you are greeted by an eerie sight. Before you lies the bog, its surface covered with stunted, weedy vegetation and shrouded by a thin mist. Crickets sing in the shadows as the full moon casts its glow from high above. This place has a spooky air about it, and the far off sound of wolves howling in the forest reaches your ears. To the east lies a ring of large square stones set upon a hilltop. In the center of the ring rests a stone altar or sarcophagus of some kind.

The wolf howls are actually Morda's goblins, who regard the moon as a deity. They are too busy to harass the PCs at this time and take no part in the encounter. If the party tries to track down the source of the howling, the goblins hear them coming and retreat deeper into the forest.

The party must be careful on the bog because its surface is not strong enough to hold their weight in many places. Anyone standing on it has a 20% chance per round of falling through (40% if wearing armor heavier than studded leather) and plunging down into the cold, murky depths of the bog. This is extremely dangerous because, in the dark water, the character might not find the hole back to the surface and could quickly drown. Unless the victim has some special way of locating the hole, it takes 1d6+1 rounds to find it and escape. A character can hold his breath up to 1/3 his Constitution score in rounds. A PC attempting to hold his breath longer than this must make a successful Constitution check each round, suffering a –2 penalty after the first initial round. (See the *DMG* for rules on Holding Your Breath). Once a check is failed, the character must breathe; if he cannot reach the surface, he drowns.

The best way to gather the tar is to cut a hole in the surface of the bog near the edge of the forest where the ground is firm on one side. From there, a character must plunge down 15 feet to the mucky bottom and scoop the tar into a bucket. Of course, without a light source the task proves difficult. A rock with a *continual light* spell cast upon it would provide sufficient illumination. Collecting the tar is tiring and dangerous work, as the PC must hold his breath for several minutes while scooping up tar and returning to the surface to get a fresh breath of air. It takes 1½ hours for one person to fill all three barrels (30 minutes/barrel). At the end of this time, characters who gathered the tar must make a Constitution check at –2 to avoid fatigue. If the check is failed, the character suffers a –1 attack and save penalty until he has rested a full eight hours.

Heroes returning from the bog encounter an unexpected enemy.

Furthermore, anyone who gathered tar now reeks with such a hideous stench that no one can stand to be near him. This smell goes away after a day or so, but until then it is a deadly hazard for the unsuspecting character. A young anhkheg from the woods is attracted to the area by the smell of black peat bog tar and trails the party as they travel back down to town. The monster attacks the PCs halfway down the hill, imposing a –5 penalty to surprise as it bursts out of the dark woods. Anyone carrying a barrel full of tar must be careful because the barrels now weigh 75 pounds and the risk of falling downhill is greater (Dexterity check at –3). If a barrel falls, it must make a save vs. crushing blow or break apart, spilling the precious tar all over the ground.

Anhkheg: INT non-; AL N; AC 2 (underside 4); MV 12, Br 6; HD 6; hp 36; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3d6 crush + 1d4 acid; SA squirt acid 30' for 5d4 damage once per six hours; SZ L (10' long); ML 9; XP 675, *MM*/7.

Should the PCs decide to investigate the hill to the southeast of the bog, they find the ring of stones on top to be very ancient. The altar in the center resembles a stone sarcophagus from a distance, but close inspection reveals its true nature. It is a large slab of rectangular rock engraved with worn writing. This

writing is a very old dialect of wood elf; anyone with the ancient languages proficiency can make a successful check to decipher it. The writing acknowledges that the circle is a stellar observatory. Anyone of good alignment standing within the circle and gazing up at the stars for at least one turn gains the benefit of a *divination* spell immediately, as if cast by an 8th-level priest. Only one divination can be gained per year. The PCs can glean some valuable information about Morda and her minions from the divination, but the DM must be careful not to give too much away.

Back at the Inn

When the party returns to the inn, they are probably weary and want to get some sleep. A few hours later, six of Morda's goblin thieves sneak into the inn with a *dead man's candle*: this magic item is made from the severed hand of a hanged criminal. A black candle is clutched in its horrid fingers. The item causes all the residents of a single house to save vs. spell at –3 or fall asleep (or remain asleep) as long as the candle burns within it. The candle burns for 2d4 turns, is usable only by thieves, and can be created only by non-good witches. It is usable only once. The goblins sneak through the inn until they find the characters' rooms. Picking the door locks, they enter and steal any baneberries or barrels of black peat bog tar they find. If they find none, then they steal one random item from each character. The goblins are not bright enough to distinguish between mundane and valuable items, so a character is as likely to lose his lantern as his magic sword. If they are somehow discovered, they flee and head back to the woods. Morda covers their escape by casting a *wall of fog* on the PCs through Scratch, who is waiting near the inn door in black cat form. If successful, the goblins leave and return to Morda's lair with their booty (although they leave behind several half-eaten fish skeletons). A thunderstorm hits the area soon afterward, wiping out all their tracks.

Assuming the goblins were successful, the PCs awake in the morning to find fish skeletons strewn about their rooms and many of their ingredients or possessions missing. Questioning Cole Keegan and the other guests at the inn reveals nothing; they slept soundly and heard nothing unusual. They are all concerned for the party and are quite dismayed by the theft. Dav Shean, the chief of militia, is summoned and takes down the PCs' report. Dav promises to do everything he can to recover the lost items, and then he dispatches his militia men to question the neighbors about the incident. No one recalls seeing or hearing anything. The investigation continues, but Dav advises the PCs that it will take some time, so they might as well go about their business.

Chapter Five: The High Forest

The next ingredient on Kamen's list is root of shrieking mandrake. This grows near tree roots in the rich soil of forests and must be sniffed out by bloodhounds. Bloodhounds can be obtained from Blarney Allen (area **8**). Blarney charges 10 gp a day (2 gp/dog) for their use and insists that he go along, since he is their master. The dogs are large for their breed and bad-tempered like Blarney, but no one disputes that they have the keenest noses around. Blarney has five dogs and tells the party that they need all of them if they want a decent chance of finding the buried roots.

The PCs might remember that Kamen warned them to use ear protection against the shrieking of the mandrake root. A *silence* spell would work best, but earplugs or cotton stuffed in the ear offers some protection as well. Cotton can be purchased at Rory's General Store (area **5**) or the Tailor's shop (area **19**). The cost is 4 cp per character.

The roots can be found anywhere within the edge of the High Forest. Without Blarney's dogs, the PCs have virtually no chance of finding them without the aid of a *locate plants & animals* spell. PC druids have a 5% chance/level per turn of finding a root; each of Blarney's dogs has a 15% chance/turn of successfully sniffing one out (75% chance with all five hounds).

Once the root is dug up, it immediately begins its piercing shriek. All those within 60 feet must save vs. paralyzation at –2 or become deaf for 1d12 hours, suffering a –1 penalty to surprise rolls, a +1 penalty to initiative rolls, a 20% chance of spell failure for spells with verbal components. PCs who take the precaution of plugging their ears suffer no penalty to their save. Furthermore, if a save is failed there is a 10% chance that the damage is severe and lasts for 1d4 weeks unless a *cure deafness* spell is cast. Each root shrieks for 1d4 turns, stops for another 1d4 turns, and then resumes shrieking. Strangely enough, the shriek does not deafen animals but sends them into a berserk frenzy instead. If the dogs have no protection against the shrieking, then they must save vs. paralyzation as well. If a dog fails to save, it begins to howl and foam at the mouth. It runs off at full speed into the High Forest and begins viciously tearing up the woods. This activity attracts the attention of a pack of worgs in the area, which they regard as their territory. The pack chases the dogs out of the forest and attacks the PCs as the dogs cower behind them. If the mandrake root is still shrieking, the worgs must save vs. paralyzation as well. If a worg fails to save, it goes berserk and attacks with a +3 bonus to hit and damage.

Worgs (5): INT low; AL NE; AC 6; MV 18; HD 3+3; hp 22, 21, 20, 18, 18; THAC0 18 (15 when berserk); #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (+3 when berserk); SZ M (5' long); ML 11; XP 120; *MM*/362.

Back in Town

The characters are watched as they gather the roots. One of the oak trees nearby is under the control of Badbark, Morda's quickwood servant, and it relates all that it sees to her. Once informed by Badbark that the party has found the precious mandrake, Morda makes preparations to frighten away the annoying PCs. That night, Morda uses her cauldron to *animate* one of the local farmer's scarecrows. The PCs are startled to see a group of panic-stricken villagers come running into town.

> Suddenly, the peaceful night silence is broken by the sound of running feet and fearful yells. A farmer and his family run into town and start babbling about an evil scarecrow. "Help! Help!," the

man cries. "My scarecrow attacked us! It bashed down the door and came right for me, head spinning around with eyes afire and cackling like a madman! We barely escaped with our lives. Please help!"

If the PCs do not aid the family then they run off to the Watch Tower (area **1**) to rouse the militia men. In any case, two rounds after the farmer's plea for help, the scarecrow arrives and attacks the PCs.

Out of the darkness comes a terrifying sight. A scarecrow made of wood and rope with a leering, spinning pumpkin head staggers towards you. Red, flickering light shines out of its eyeholes, and a gutteral cackling issues from its jagged, carven mouth. Its gait, uneven and disjointed, carries it inexorably forward as it stretches out cruel wooden claws to rake the air. Slowly it closes in and attacks.

Scarecrow: INT non-; AL N; AC 6; MV 6; HD 6; hp 42; THAC0 15; #AT 1+gaze; Dmg 1d6+*charm*; SA gaze; SD immune to cold; vulnerable to fire (+1 to hit and +1 damage per die); SZ M (6' tall); ML 20; XP 1,400; *MM*/170 (golem).

Town Meeting

After this event it becomes clear to the townsfolk that something is definitely amiss. Alowicious Farntree calls for a Council Meeting to decide what to do. None of the council members or the townsfolk have ever encountered such a thing as the scarecrow, and they are understandably frightened. The Council doesn't really know why these strange things are happening or what to do about them, so they simply decide to order the town militia to patrol Woody Glen every day hoping that their presence will prevent any further trouble.

Dav Shean tells the PCs that his investigation of the theft of their items has failed to reveal anything yet, and with the more serious scarecrow incident demanding all his attention, it may be quite some time before he can get back to it. He apologizes to the PCs, but there is little he can do.

If the characters decide to investigate matters for themselves, they find no clues. It is obvious, though, that supernatural forces may be at work and that someone does not want the PCs around. At this time the PCs are approached by Rory Twigham, who believes that perhaps they could help the town solve the mystery. He suggests that the party confer with Father Turghan at the House of Sun and Earth. Rory explains that Turghan is the religious leader of the community. Who better to turn to on matters of the supernatural?

The House of Sun and Earth

If the PCs take Rory's advice and seek out Father Turghan at the church, they acquire the following information. Father Turghan is very concerned but does not know what is causing the trouble. He and his acolytes have prayed to Chauntea and Lathander but have received no enlightening visions. He can only conclude that dark forces must be at work. However, he has heard rumors from many townsfolk (especially Bibb Swiftwillow) that the old Sebastian Manor in the hills north of town is haunted. If that is true, then it should definitely be investigated. He suggests that perhaps the heroes were sent by the gods to help the town, and they will have his blessing and the gratitude of the church if they do so. If the PCs ask about the manor's history, the priest can give them the following information from the area's history books:

"The manor was built by the eccentric Sebastian family two hundred years ago. At that time, Woody Glen had only a few cabins and the glimmering of a silver mine, so there were few visitors to bother the Sebastians, and they were left to their own devices.

"Lord Rhivas Sebastian was a cruel, violent man who cared only for money and power. At one time, he had been an important official in Waterdeep, but after it was discovered that he was involved in several shady deals, his title was stripped from him and his family was expelled from the city. Humiliated and enraged, Rhivas took the Sebastians far away to live in bitter exile in the High Forest, far from Waterdeep.

"As the years went on, the family became more and more reclusive and began dabbling in the dark arts. Lord Rhivas' heirs secretly plotted against one another for their father's inheritance. Eventually, the entire family was at each other's throats. Rhivas broke down and went insane. In a rage, he murdered his wife Mara, strangling her in the manor attic. Stricken with horror and grief at the realization of his foul deed, Rhivas hurled himself through the northern attic window and plummeted to his death.

"The family was wracked by these events, and Rhivas' sons and daughters fled in terror or disposed of one another until the manor was left silent and uninhabited, a dark monument to their insanity.

"Around town it is said that many of the Sebastian souls are unable to rest because of their deeds, and that they still lurk in the dark corners of the manor."

If the PCs want to talk to Bibb Swiftwillow about the manor, he is usually found at his brewery (area **7**) during the day or Cole's Grapevine at night. Bibb knows less than Father Turghan about the manor, but he has supposedly been there recently, just poking around.

If questioned about deadly nightshade, Father Turghan thinks that some might be found in the Sebastian family cemetery. Should the PCs decide to investigate the manor, he wishes them luck and offers them free healing should they need it.

Chapter Six: Sebastian Manor

To get to Sebastian Manor, the PCs must follow another old road that leads up into the foothills. This road was once the private drive of the wealthy Sebastian family many years ago, but it has not been used for so long that it is covered with high weeds and is difficult to find. However, with directions from Father Turghan or Bibb Swiftwillow, the PCs have no trouble locating it. (At this point, one of the PCs notices that the cat Scratch is following them. As soon as this happens, Scratch bounds away

The gargoyle of Sebastian Manor spots its next meal.

into the high grass and changes into crow form. Then he swiftly flies northward, past the manor to Morda's lair. The PCs should be able to figure out that the black cat and crow are the same creature and that he has been spying on them from the very start.

After a short trek through the wilderness, the PCs find the manor high on the north rim of the valley.

> Crouched atop the wooded hill is Sebastian Manor, a mansion of cold stone and rotting wood adorned with leering gargoyles that perch on the many pointed gables. Broken stonework lies everywhere. The road leads up to the entrance where a rotting carriage lays tilted in the grass, a crest still faintly visible on its weathered surface. Cracked, stone pillars support the sagging portico. Within it are two stained and pock-marked lion statues flanking a pair of great iron-bound doors.

Rhivas dabbled in dark sorcery and unleashed many horrible magics as a result. Thanks to his careless experiments, one of the manor's gargoyles comes to life every night, and whenever Rhivas' tomb in the cemetery is disturbed. It immediately attacks if the PCs have disturbed the tomb. Otherwise, it lurks in the woods or the attic, waiting until the party is asleep before attacking. If the PCs are out at night, they might notice (25% chance) that one of the gargoyles is missing. The DM should try to instill a sense of dread in the PCs at the sight.

Gargoyle: INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9, Fl 15 (C); HD 4+4; hp 32; THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6/1d4; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; SZ M; ML 11; XP 420; *MM*/125.

The PCs will probably look for deadly nightshade in the cemetery first, but they will find things there that will inevitably lead them to investigate the manor.

Features of the Manor

The manor is two stories with a large attic. The ceilings are about 20' high. Dust and debris are everywhere. Large, torn tapestries and once-elegant furniture can be found throughout its dark and cobwebbed rooms. Here and there hang family portraits. Bats, rats, and spiders have moved in, adding to the spooky atmosphere. Every now and then, the restless spirit of a murdered Sebastian roams the halls, invisibly opening and closing doors, levitating small objects, and climbing stairways with creaking footsteps. This activity occurs almost exclusively at night and is usually more than enough to send the bravest explorers screaming in stark terror.

One of the spirits of Rhivas' sons is so full of malice and unrest that it manifests itself as a poltergeist (see area **5** for statistics). The poltergeist is the only spirit in the manor that is dangerous, but the others may still cause supernatural events to happen. There is a 75% chance per night of this. If an event occurs, roll 1d6 on the "Supernatural Event Table" (see sidebar).

1. Entry Hall. This vast hall is 40' high. The floor, walls, and ceilings are made of granite blocks, often supported by wooden beams and rafters. A thick, tattered, weatherstained rug lies on the floor behind the double doors. In front of two immense, square support pillars in the center of the hall are armor stands. The left one holds only a rusted breastplate, shield, and helmet (useless), but the right one holds a suit of plate mail and shield in good condition, if a bit dirty. The plate mail is human-sized and is not magical, but the shield is +2, *+3 vs. missiles*. Both bear the Sebastian coat-of-arms: a quadrant shield surrounded by curling red ribbons and leaves, with a lion rampant in the center. This place was meant to impress guests and also served as a grand ballroom.

The sweeping stairways going up to the second floor were once magnificent works of oak and mahogany. Now they are weak and dangerous. Anyone attempting to use them has a 25% chance of falling through, suffering 1d6 hp damage.

2. Dining Room. Rotting, overturned chairs clutter the floor here. The great oak dining table has a few broken plates and brass candle holders on it. There is a large chandelier hanging from the center of the ceiling. Tampering with the chandelier causes it to crash to the floor. Anyone underneath suffers 2d6 hp damage unless he or she makes a successful Dexterity check.

There is a white marble statue of Lord Rhivas to the north of the dining table. He appears as a handsome older man, richly dressed and arrogant. As the PCs look on, dark tears start to pour from its eyes. (This is caused by the spirit of Rhivas manifesting its grief through the statue.)

South of the dining table stands a white marble statue of Rhivas' wife, Mara. She is dressed in a flowing gown and was obviously very beautiful. Her expression is one of sadness. As the PCs look upon this statue, bloody handprints appear around Mara's neck as if she were being strangled. (This is also caused by Rhivas' spirit.)

A stuffed moose head hangs eight feet up on the stone wall to the east. It hides a peephole accessed from the secret stairwell behind the wall. Anyone looking through the peephole from inside the secret chamber can see almost the entire dining room through the moose's open mouth. The spiral stairs climb to the upper floors. If the secret passage to the northeast is followed, it leads to a stairway going up to the second floor. Past the stairs is a peephole looking out into the entry hall.

Finally, if the moose's right antler is twisted forward, the bookcase in the library (area **3**) swings outward, revealing a secret room.

3. Library. The bookshelves here are mostly empty, but a few contain some crumbling, old texts of various sizes. These are mostly novels, essays, and bookkeeping ledgers, but if a PC takes a few minutes to peruse them he will find some hastily scribbled notes crammed between the pages of one book. These are pages from the diary of Mara detailing nightmarish days spent with her demented husband and their offspring. One excerpt tells of her fears of Rhivas' growing eccentricities and violent outbursts. She also mentions a purse of gold hidden behind a painting somewhere in the attic. Mara was apparantly afraid she would be forced to flee the manor someday.

The secret room behind the bookshelves has two staircases: one going up to another secret room on the second floor and one going down into a tunnel leading to Lord Rhivas' tomb in the cemetery (area **9**). Also found in this room are a chair and a long bench lined with animal skulls, scalpels, bottles of phermaldehyde, and a vial of mild poison (ingested; onset 1–4 turns; 10/0 damage). Rhivas spent many hours here dabbling with necromancy.

4. Chapel. A small altar to Deneir rests against the west wall. A circular altar to Waukeen rests near the southeast wall. Once avid worshipers of these gods, the Sebastians stopped any religious pretense once their private war began. Anyone spending the night here witnesses a supernatural event and a ghostly manifestation of one of the Sebastians, who stares forlornly at them for a few moments before fading away. This manifestation is a poltergeist. It plans to attack the PCs later, but for now it wishes only to frighten them.

5. Study. This room has several desks and chairs in it, all badly rotted. The windows to the north are broken and wind flows through them with a moaning sound. The four stone statues represent Rhivas' children. Their heads have been broken off and lay shattered upon the floor. If these are disturbed, the poltergeist of one of the sons starts throwing sharp fragments of stone at the PCs. If it is detected or attacked, it flees to the secret study in the east wing (area **7**). Because of the sheer malevolance of this spirit, it has become considerably stronger and tougher than a typical poltergeist. These differences are reflected in its statistics.

Poltergeist: INT low; AL LE; AC 8; MV 12; HD 2; hp 16; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (thrown objects); SA opponents hit must save vs. spell or flee in terror for 1d12 rounds (50% chance of dropping held items); once/day can manifest itself as a ghostly image lasting 1d4 rounds (opponents viewing it must save vs. paralyzation or be frozen for 1d6 rounds); cast *phantasmal force* three times/day; SD hit only by silver or magical weapons, invisible (–4 to hit); immune to mind-influencing spells; turned as wight; driven back by sprinkled holy water or strongly presented holy symbols; SZ M (6' tall); ML 10; XP 420; *MM*/296 (modified).

Supernatural Event Table

1. The characters hear the faint sound of rattling chains coming from some dark corner or room. The noise stops only after someone makes the effort to check it out.

2. Several dozen bats suddenly flutter from their perches in the rafters. They swoop alarmingly about the manor for a few minutes and then settle down in another area.

3. Creaking footsteps are heard from a nearby room or stairway. This is followed by the sound of a door opening and then closing.

4. Candles, torches, and fires suddenly flicker and go out as a cold wind blows from nowhere. This is accompanied by a faint moaning.

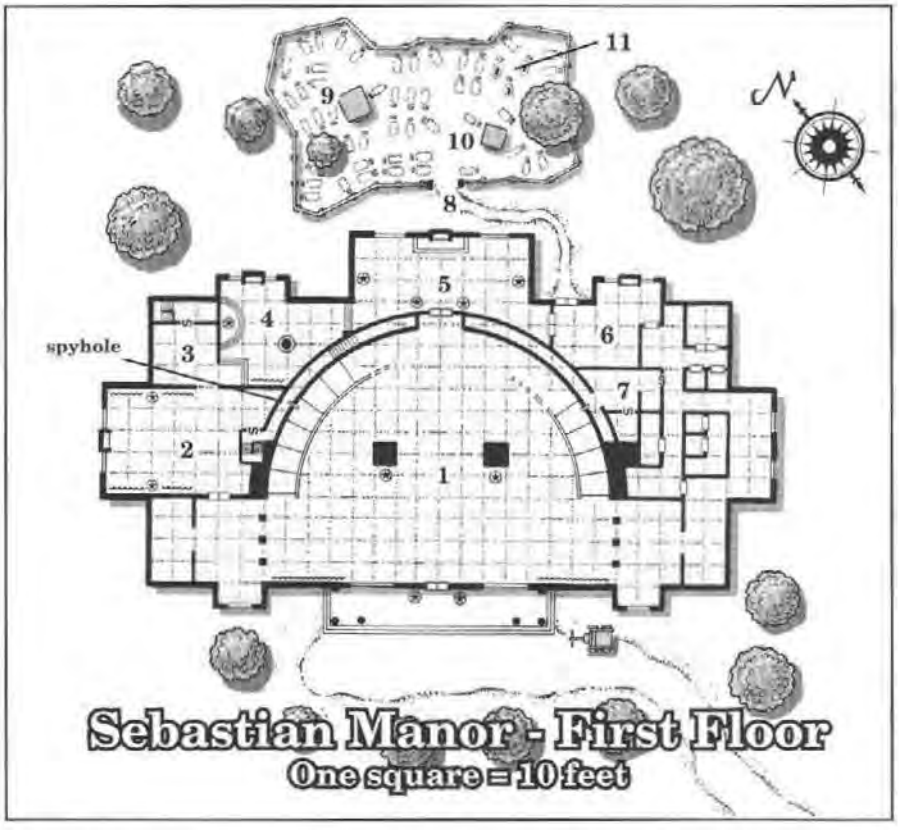
5. Lights can be seen shining through windows or from under doorsills. When investigated, the lights go out.

6. Paintings inexplicably change their positions, hang upside down, or depict changing views. These painting are always the portraits of Sebastian family members.

6. Kitchen. This room's chairs and tables are badly damaged, and silverware is scattered all over the floor. There is a fishy stench coming from a basin by the fireplace. Inside it are three half-eaten fish skeletons and one of the items stolen from the characters back at the inn, if any.

The kitchen was sacked by Morda's goblins. They found little of interest except a few pots and pans to be used as weapons and makeshift helmets. One lost interest in his stolen booty and left it here.

7. Secret Study. This room has a desk and chair upon which rest some old quill pens, a bottle of dry ink, crumbling parchment, and a scroll with the names of several former officials of Waterdeep written on it. The



names have been scratched out with bold sweeps of ink. These were the men responsible for expelling Rhivas from Waterdeep. One by one he arranged for them to be framed and jailed or exiled as his revenge. An arched doorway leads to a hollow wall with two peepholes looking out into the entry hall. (Rhivas enjoyed spying on his guests.)

Another secret door in the south wall leads to a treasure room. There is a small chest in the southeast corner filled with 300 gp. It is not locked but is trapped with six spring-loaded needles that shoot out when the lid is opened. These hit anyone directly in front of the chest (THAC0 15) for 1d4 hp damage.

8. Cemetery. This private cemetery is surrounded by a low iron fence. Gravestones and tombs of long-dead Sebastians are arranged with no discernable pattern. Thick creepers have grown everywhere, and any paths that might have led through the cemetery are now obscured. The area has a rather disturbing and ominous look, and the PCs start to feel uneasy the moment they enter. If the PCs look for deadly nightshade, they do not find any until they discover the open graves (area **11**).

9. The Tomb of Lord Rhivas Sebastian. This large, vaulted tomb of grey marble has the name of Lord Rhivas carved on its thick double doors. Stone gargoyles and iron spikes line its steep roof. It is locked and sealed and would require a combined strength of 40 to break down, providing the PCs have the proper tools. If the PCs have no such tools, a *knock* spell will suffice. If the PCs physically or magically disturb Rhivas' tomb, one of the gargoyles on top of the manor comes to life and attacks the party. It arrives in 1d4 rounds. This only happens if the PCs have not previously encountered or defeated the monster. (See page 20 for statistics.)

Once inside the tomb, the PCs find a 15' × 15' sepulchre containing an elaborate stone coffin on a rectangular dais and a trap door in the floor by the north wall. The trap door leads to a narrow underground passage that heads back to the secret room of the library (area **3**). If the PCs open Rhivas' coffin, they are greeted by a terrible sight:

> The heavy stone lid slides off with a loud grating noise, revealing the worm-ridden corpse of the late Lord Rhivas, still clad in the tattered remnants of a wealthy nobleman's clothes and jewelry. Nauseatingly, the worms wiggle and writhe. Suddenly, one of the worms leaps out of the coffin and the corpse bolts upright with a piercing shriek.

Lord Rhivas is doomed to eternal unlife as a son of Kyuss as punishment for his wife's murder. His only desire is to be destroyed and set free from his torment. To this end, he attacks the PCs, hoping they will retaliate.

Lord Rhivas (son of Kyuss): INT low; AL CE; AC 10; MV 9; HD 4; hp 32; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA *cause fear, 15' radius* (save vs. spell or flee for one turn; 60% chance of dropping hand-held items); rotting disease; worm infestation; SD regenerate 2 hp/round; fire, lightning, acid, and holy water cause permanent damage; holy water and holy symbols touched to the creature halt regeneration; turned as a mummy; SZ M (6' tall); ML special; XP 1,400, *MC GREYHAWK*.

The jewelry Rhivas wears consists of a gold ring with a cat's-eye topaz (200 gp), a fine gold chain necklace (150 gp), and an ivory bracelet engraved with Rhivas' name (65 gp).

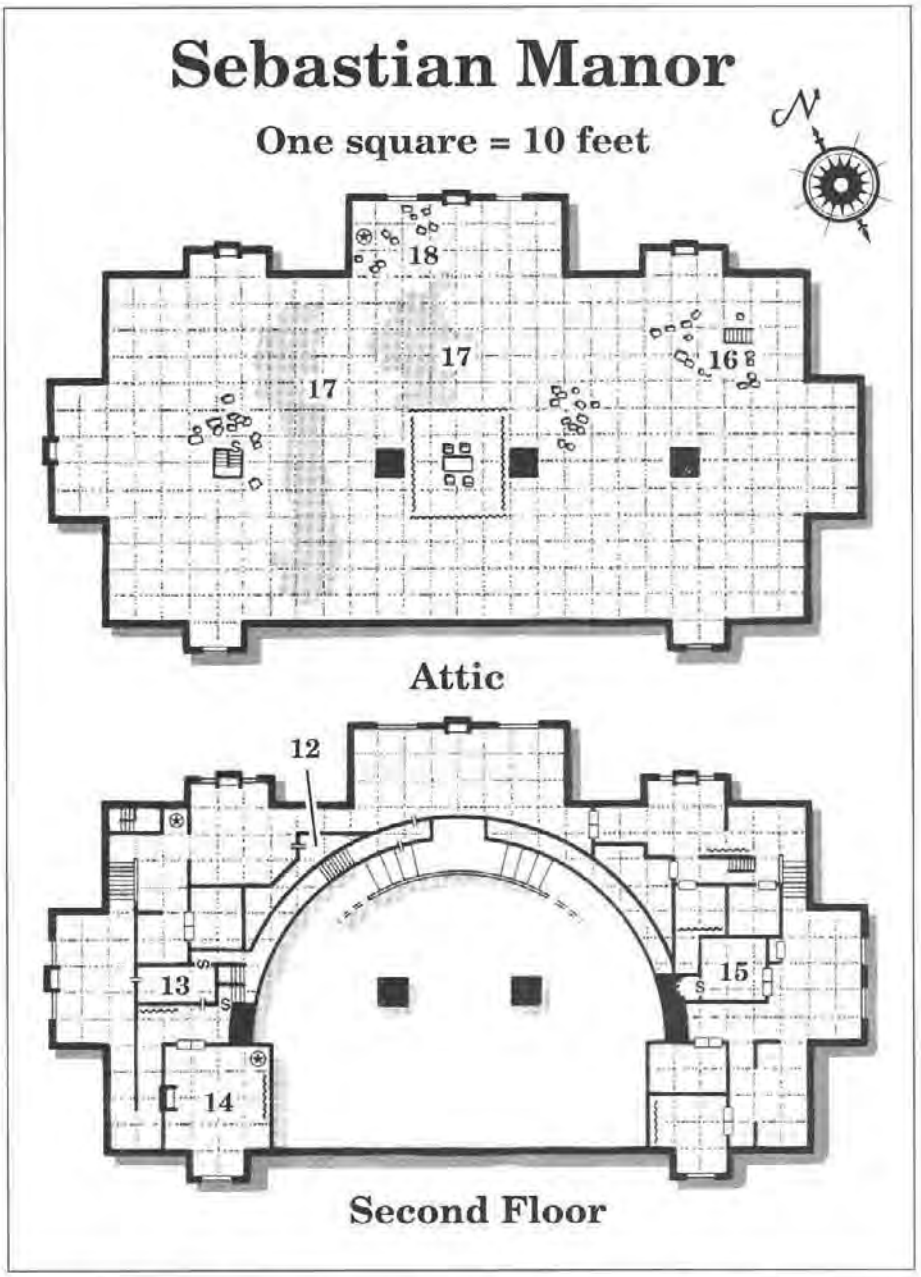
10. The Tomb of Lady Mara Sebastian. This tomb is very similar to Rhivas' in appearance, although it has no gargoyle statues. It is locked and sealed and requires a combined strength of 40 to open. Inside is Mara's coffin and the remnants of her skeleton. There is nothing of further interest here.

11. Open Graves. The PCs are shocked to discover three recently opened graves. At the bottom of the six foot pits are rotting coffins. The lids have been opened and the bodies are nowhere to be seen. There are several small patches of nightshade growing around the graves, but it

seems that someone else has recently harvested most of them. As a result, the PCs are only able to acquire half a bushel. Remember that they must harvest the plants at night and in total darkness. If the PCs come during the day, they must wait or explore the manor until nightfall. To prevent moonlight from ruining the harvest, the PCs could erect a small tent above the plants to provide total darkness, although a *darkness* spell would be the best solution. The harvest takes a half hour to gather if at least three characters participate, twice as long if there are fewer PCs, and care must be taken not to touch the poisonous plants. If the PCs do not have thick gloves to protect them, they run the risk of being poisoned. Unprotected PCs must make a Wisdom check: a failed roll indicates that the PC has been unknowingly pricked. Within 24 hours, he or she suffers 1d10 hp of damage and loses one point of Constitution. This continues every day until the character dies from loss of hit points, reaches 0 Constitution (in which case he also dies), or receives a *cure disease* or *neutralize poison* spell.

Half of the nightshade has been harvested by Morda's goblins, who came here looking for the plants and corpses for the witch to animate. Having found both at this site, they then decided to do a bit of exploring within the mansion but found little of value within.

Tracking the goblins is easy. If the party includes a character with tracking proficiency, that PC can make a proficiency check with a +3 bonus. If successful, the PC detects the impressions of five or six sets of small footprints (goblins) leading from the cemetery to the back door of the manor kitchen (area **6**).



12. Secret Armory. The secret door leading to this room is unique and trapped. The door is 3' wide and 7' high. It operates by grabbing a ledge near the floor and sliding the door up into the ceiling. The door then locks in place with a loud click. A secret pressure plate in the floor just past the doorway activates the trap as soon as it is stepped upon twice. If two people enter the room or if one person steps on the plate twice, the trap springs. If this happens, the secret door slams down with considerable force, causing 2d6 hp damage to anyone underneath it and pinning the victim unless he or she makes a successful Dexterity check at –3. The door locks shut at this point, so it will have to be broken in order to free any pinned PC.

This place was a secret armory as well as a spying chamber into a nearby room. Rusted crossbows, morning stars, picks, and flails hang on the walls. They are too badly corroded to be useful.

13. Treasure Vault. This room has a handsome desk, a high-backed velvet chair in front of it, an empty bookshelf in the southwest corner, and a large iron safe against the southern wall. The desk, chair, and bookshelf have long since had their contents gnawed away by rats, but the metal safe appears in good condition. It is locked and thieves suffer a –15% chance to open it. Inside are ten 2-lb. gold bars worth 25 gp each. There is also a potion of *gaseous form* in a small, crystal wine carafe.

14. Master Bedroom. This place presents a hellish scene. Everything is torn up and broken. Dark stains spatter the walls, and a naturally mummified corpse lays in the bed, a large hole in its skull.

Long ago after Mara's death, one of the Sebastian daughters became convinced that she was Mara and began living in the master bedroom. Enraged by this, one of her twisted brothers killed her with a hammer.

There is a cracked mirror on the northern wall that shows the reflection of a well-dressed young man carrying a bloody hammer standing behind any PC looking in the mirror. When the PC turns around, he sees nothing. Any PC brave enough to spend the night here witnesses a supernatural event. (Roll on the "Supernatural Event Table.")

15. Bathchamber. This bathroom was shared by the Sebastian siblings. It has two round wooden basins for washing and a large vanity bench for cosmetics. A secret door in the southwest wall leads to a small chamber that has been carved into one of the manor's giant support pillars. Inside is a partial skeleton dangling from a rotting noose. Evidently, one of the Sebastians preferred suicide over living with his demented family.

16. Heirloom Trunks. There are more than a dozen trunks of worthless Sebastian heirlooms here. They contain mostly clothing, unfinished paintings, books on gardening and herbalism, birdcages, mousetraps, and other miscellaneous household items. They appear to have been rummaged through recently.

17. Weak Floor. This area of the wooden attic floor is extremely rotted and weak, though it appears stable from a distance. Anyone walking on the area must make a Dexterity check at –4 to avoid falling through the floor and down to the next level, suffering 2d6 hp damage from the 20' drop.

18. Murder Site. Here, amid more trunks and a statue of a wood nymph, is where Mara was strangled by Rhivas. He discovered her hiding a purse of gold in one of the trunks and realized she planned to leave him. After killing her in a senseless rage, Rhivas flung himself through the northern window and plummeted to his death. The manor's poltergeist often lurks here, attracted to the aura of violence that still permeates the air. Unfortunately for Morda's goblins, they discovered the spot and the purse of gold and were just about to leave when the spirit manifested and attacked, slaying the one with the gold. The others frantically tied a rope to the window sill and escaped, beating a hasty retreat back to the witch's lair.

If the PCs discover this area, they will find the corpse of the goblin still clutching the purse, which contains 50 gp. It has a large shard of glass impaled through its heart. They also spot the rope tied to the window sill. This was not visible from the outside as the rope was hidden by a large patch of vines clinging to the wall. If a ranger makes a successful tracking check at +3, he can discern a trail at the bottom of the rope more recent than any others the party might have found, and that it can be tracked well into the woods. In fact, the ranger should be able to track the goblins all the way back to Morda's lair. If the party does not have anyone with tracking ability, the PCs meet up with Jack Spry outside the manor once they decide to leave. He has come to see how they are doing and has discovered the trail on his own. Jack offers to guide the party to the end of the trail if they wish. It is important that the party find and follow the trail by some means, as this leads them to the final chapter of the adventure.

If the PCs have not faced the poltergeist yet, it attacks them here. It manifests itself as a hideous rotting corpse dressed in tattered, blood-stained robes. Any PCs who do not succumb to its fear aura are attacked by flying shards of glass. (See area **5** for the poltergeist's statistics.)

Chapter Seven: Morda's Lair

As the party follows the trail back to Morda's lair, read the following description to the players:

> The trail leads almost straight north into the steep foothills of the mountains. The tracks are jumbled and wide-spaced, as if the creatures were fleeing in great haste. The woods have become especially dense and forboding here, and many of the trees almost appear to have twisted, glaring faces. Something has changed the forest in these parts, and from the looks of things, not for the better. Even the weather starts to change. The sky darkens and rain begins to drizzle down, soaking the forest.

The PCs should realize that the rain will soon wash out the tracks they are following. They will have to quicken their pace in order to reach the trail's end before it is gone. An hour later, the PCs have traveled about one mile and finally reach Morda's lair.

> From the distance ahead comes a raucous crow's call, loud and mocking. The trail turns abruptly to the southeast and ends at the base of a large hill covered with weeds and gnarled, black trees. A small path leads to the top. Crowning the hill are two circular walls, joined at the center. Each is made of thick, twisted branches and leaves. A column of smoke winds its way up into the sky from somewhere within the walls, and you catch the sound of burbling water and cackling laughter. Again, the crow calls from somewhere in the trees ahead.

Scratch has assumed crow form and is perched in the branches of a large, dead tree just inside the northern wall near Morda's hut (area **3**). He calls periodically to alert Morda and the goblins that the PCs have arrived. The goblins are hiding in their cave (area **4**). The mischievous witch has prepared an elaborate ambush for the PCs, which she hopes will catch them totally by surprise. She suspects that the PCs have no idea that a witch is behind all the trouble in town and is looking forward to her dramatic entrance.

1. Path. This small path winds its way up the hill, passes through the wooden wall and into the center of Morda's witching circle (area **2**). The passageway through the wall has recently been blocked with more thick branches and leaves. The

The Villains

Morda: AL CN with evil tendencies; AC 10; MV 9; W7 (Witch Kit—see *CWH*); hp 24; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4/1d3 (dagger); S 8, D 12, C13, I 16, W 15, Ch 5; ML 12; XP 2,000; *broom of flying, witch wand* (see below).

The *witch wand* is usable by wizards only and has 32 charges. Twice/week at a cost of one charge, the user may cast *insatiable thirst* (substitute *blindness* for this spell if the *ToM* is not available), *reduce,* and *Maximillian's earthen grasp* (*ToM*; substitute *slow* for this spell if needed). Three times/week at a cost of one charge, the user may cast *blur, protection from good,* and *glitterdust.*

As a 7th-level witch, Morda may brew calmative: it takes one hour to prepare one dose which causes *sleep* on contact (save applicable); one dose is sufficient to coat any single weapon and it has no effect on victims with more than 8 HD. She can brew poison; it takes one hour to prepare one dose of Class L contact poison (onset time 2-8 minutes, damage 10/0) sufficient to coat a single weapon. Both the calmative and poison lose their potency in 24 hours.

As a witch, Morda constantly struggles with the extra-planar forces from which she derives her power. As a result, there is a 25% chance per night that such a struggle occurs, lasting from about 6 P.M. to 6 A.M. During this time, she suffers a –2 penalty to her attack rolls and her saving throws.

Morda also owns a special *cauldron of brewing*: a large black cauldron usable only by witches. It has the following powers usable three times/week: *metamorphose liquids* (*ToM*), *wall of fog, locate object,* and *skull watch* (*FRA*; substitute *magic mouth* for this spell if desired). Usable once/week are *monster summoning II* and *animate dead.* Once/month the user may *animate scarecrow* (turns any scarecrow visible to the caster into a monster of the same name). The cauldron enables Morda to cast these spells on anything she or her familiar Scratch can see, with a maximum range of one mile. Thus, Morda can send Scratch into town, see what he sees in the reflection of the cauldron brew, and cast the aformentioned powers from afar, counting range from the familiar.

Morda usually memorizes the following spells: *charm person, grease, magic missile, spook; alter self, invisibility, irritation; infravision, spectral force; Otiluke's resilient sphere.*

Her spellbook contains all of the spells listed above plus the following: *comprehend languages, detect magic, identify, read magic; detect good, hovering skull* (*CWH*). The DM can substitute *wizard eye* for this spell if desired, although it is fourth level.

Scratch (black cat familiar): INT low; AL NE; AC 4 due to quickness; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–2 bite or claw; SA *polymorph* into crow once/day; SD 80' infravision; 50% chance to detect invisible or hidden creatures; SZ T; ML 9; XP 120.

Scratch has no taste for combat and immediately flees if attacked.

Morda's "moon goblins" (20): INT low; AL CE; AC 6; MV 7; HD 1–1; hp 7 (×2), 6 (×4), 5 (×7), 4 (×5), 3 (×2); THAC0 20 (19 with missiles); #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 or 1d6 (club); SA hurl rotting missiles up to 10 feet; thief abilities (see below); SZ S; ML 14; XP 35 each; *MM*/163.

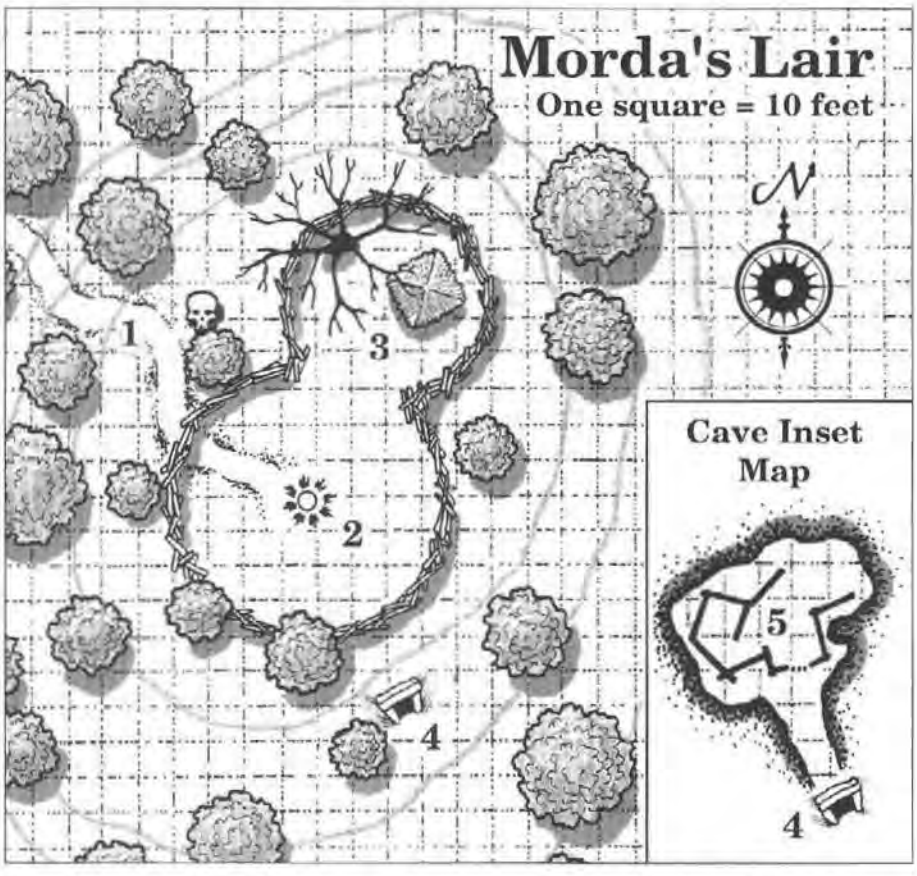
Thief abilities: PP 40%, OL 20%, FRT 10%, HS 40%, MS 45%, DN 30%, CW 65%, RL 0%.

Morda befriended this small band of goblins many months ago. They were outcasts from their tribe and apparently worshipped some bizarre moon god. Since then, they have been exposed to many of her experimental magic brews and have become extremely warped and unstable as a result. It is this magical tampering with their nature that has led to the goblins' chaotic nature. They have also practiced hurling the rotting remains of their meals into opponents' faces. Any foe struck by such a missile must save vs. poison or be overcome by the foul stench and goo, suffering –1 to hit and save for 1d4 rounds. Lastly, as outcasts from their tribe, the goblins have learned to rely on stealth to survive. Thus, each has the thieving abilities of a 3rd-level thief.

Morda's magic impressed the goblins, and they refer to themselves as "Da Broom Boyz" and her as the "Da Broom Lady." They serve her mainly as porters, lugging her cauldron from place to place and fetching things, but their numbers make them capable guards as well.

Badbark (quickwood): INT very; AL N; AC 5; MV 1 (roots 3); HD 7; hp 30; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SA grab with roots up to 90 feet away; SD spell absorption (if the quickwood saves vs. spell, the spell's energy is absorbed and used to radiate *fear* in a 10' radius per level of the spell); immune to fire, lightning, poison, and gas attacks; SZ L (12' tall); ML 15; XP 3,000; *MM*/293 (plant, intelligent).

Morda has just recently met Badbark, an old and rather weak quickwood, but they quickly made friends. Badbark was nearly cut for timber by a group of enthusiastic woodcutters when he was just a sapling, and he narrowly escaped with a bad saw wound. Ever since then, the quickwood has harbored a deep resentment toward humankind, so he was more than happy to assist Morda in her mischievous plot. Though he is not as effective in combat as he used to be, Badbark can control oak trees within one mile and use them to gather information. Far from feeble, the quickwood is still strong enough to make a useful and worthy bodyguard.



branches are deeply interwoven and cannot be moved aside unless a combined strength of 70 is applied against them. Even then, it takes 1d4 rounds to remove the barrier.

Morda has placed a *skull watch* spell (*FRA*) by the path near a seemingly old and shrunken oak tree (actually Badbark posing as a normal tree). The eye sockets of the skull "watch" an area 20' wide by 90' long, directed west along the path, so that any living creature which enters the area activates the spell. The skull emits a piercing shriek that can be heard up to a quarter-mile away. In addition, Morda is immediately aware that something has tripped the spell. Although she has already been warned by Scratch's crowing that the party is on its way, Morda enjoys the startling effect the *skull watch* has on unwitting victims. She also uses the scream as the signal for her goblins to ambush the party. (If the DM does not have access to the *skull watch* spell, a *magic mouth* will perform the same function). Once it is tripped, twenty goblins wielding spiked clubs, pots, pans, and rotting fish skeletons pour out of their cave at area 4 and come careening around the southern corner of the wall. They attack any PCs they find.

While this assault is underway, Morda (in area **3**), who has already cast *invisibility* upon herself, now casts *spectral force* to create the illusion of a witch standing next to the cauldron, dropping spell components into it and muttering something about "eye of newt and toe of frog." A broom appears to scuttle around the nearby circle of stone, sweeping dust and bits of rock into the fire under the cauldron. The next round, Morda mounts her *broom of flying* and invisibly takes to the air above the fight. From her aerial perch, she uses her *witch wand* to cast *insatiable thirst* (or *blindness*) on enemy spellcasters, *reduce* on fighters, and *Maximillian's earthen grasp* (or *slow*) on whomever is left. If the battle turns against her goblins, Morda uses the wand's *blur* or *protection from good* powers on herself and then flies to the other side of the fray to throw her remaining offensive spells, cackling loudly all the while and yelling, "Now I have you, my pretties!"

Morda hopes that the party will believe the illusion near the cauldron is herself preparing some great spell against them, and that the party will concentrate their efforts there, giving her and her minions time to gain the upper hand. (Though the wall is too dense to pass through, there are many open patches that allow PCs to see inside it.) Of course, once she has attacked, Morda will be visible and the PCs will probably realize that she is the real witch.

Badbark, standing next to the wall entrance, is not recognizable as anything but a normal oak tree unless someone comes within 10 feet of him. At this range, the PCs notice that the oak seems to have a distorted human face. Badbark waits until two rounds after the fight has begun and then sends his roots out to seize PCs and hold them immobile. He can send out one root per round up to 90' away. Roots cause no damage, but are too strong to be broken and take no damage from blunt weapons. Edged weapons can sever the roots but inflict only 1 point of damage, and each root has 10 hp. Once a character is successfully hit and held immobile, Badbark draws them in to his mouth, clamping down for 2-8 damage. Any spells launched at Badbark are often absorbed by him and used to create *fear,* as described in "The Villains" sidebar (see page 25).

Morda's goblins may take advantage of PCs held in Badbark's roots, striking with a +2 bonus to hit.

2. Witching Circle. Resting amid the short grass and weeds atop the hill is Morda's prized *cauldron of brewing.* Its fire is constantly stoked by thick logs underneath. The heat causes the grotesque morass of thick liquid within the cauldron to boil, hiss, and burble loudly. It was from here that Morda spied on the town and cast her potent magic.

Piled on the ground are the remnants of three human skeletons taken from the Sebastian Manor cemetery. Morda had originally planned to animate them for use against the PCs but has not had the time to do so.

3. Morda's Hut. This low, squat hut has a pointed, thatched roof. The doorway is covered by a tattered red cloth. Inside can be found an old iron stove, a wooden bench piled with leaves, straw, and thick blankets (Morda's bed), and a rickety wooden table holding clay pots, vases, a black candle, and a metal cup. One vase holds two doses of *powder of coagulation* (*ToM*; the DM should substitute a *bag of tricks* if desired); another holds dried cooking herbs. One of the clay pots hides a *beaker of plentiful potions*; *rainbow hues* (×2), *fire breath* (×2), *treasure finding*, and *levitation*.

Several small skulls dangle from the ceiling, suspended on strands of twisted hair and yarn. Hanging in the middle is a medium-sized iron pot holding a mish-mash of spider eyes, bat wings, and other ingredients of witchcraft. There are even two black crow's feathers which are actually *Quaal's feather tokens* (tree and bird).

Ouside of Morda's hut is a large, dead tree with a secret door built into its southern side. This is where Morda retreats if the fight turns against her. There she hides, hoping to remain undiscovered until the PCs leave. However, Morda will never voluntarily let her cauldron be taken away or destroyed. If this is attempted, she fights to the end, striking with her broom if necessary (Dmg 1d3). If Morda's tree is investigated, the PCs find enough deadly nightshade stored here to fill their quota.

4. Goblin Cave. Past the mine-like entrance to this cave is a low 4' passage heading north. After 20 feet it opens into a roughly circular cave 30 feet in diameter.

5. Wooden Fort. Logs and beams from Jack Spry's cabin, broken tree branches, and all manner of strange and worthless objects have been thrown together to build a crazy parody of a human fort that reaches clear up to the ceiling. The "fort" comes equipped with a fake wooden portcullis at the front (it does not function). The actual entrance is reached by climbing rope ladders up and over the top wall.

If the goblins fail their morale, this is where they flee, pulling up the rope ladders after them. If the PCs lay siege to their fort, the goblins rain down pots, pans, and fish upon their heads. If they are defeated, their fort yields no treasure except for any items or magical ingredients that have previously been stolen from the party. These belongings have been thoroughly rummaged through, but they are otherwise intact.

Concluding the Adventure

Should the PCs defeat Morda and her gang, the troubles plaguing Woody Glen will cease, the townsfolk will be spared, and the original quest can be completed. The PCs will be celebrated as heroes back in town and treated to free room and board at Cole's Grapevine for as long as they want. In short, the PCs are given the key to Woody Glen. Of course, they must return to Yartar with Kamen's ingredients to complete their mission. Upon returning to Yartar, Kamen is overjoyed at the party's success and immediately pays the PCs in full, including all accrued expenses, up to the agreed maximum. If the PCs successfully completed the adventure by gathering all the required ingredients, defeating Morda, and interacting with the townsfolk and NPCs in an admirable way, the DM should give a story award of 1,500 XPs per PC (more or less depending on how well the players roleplayed their characters).

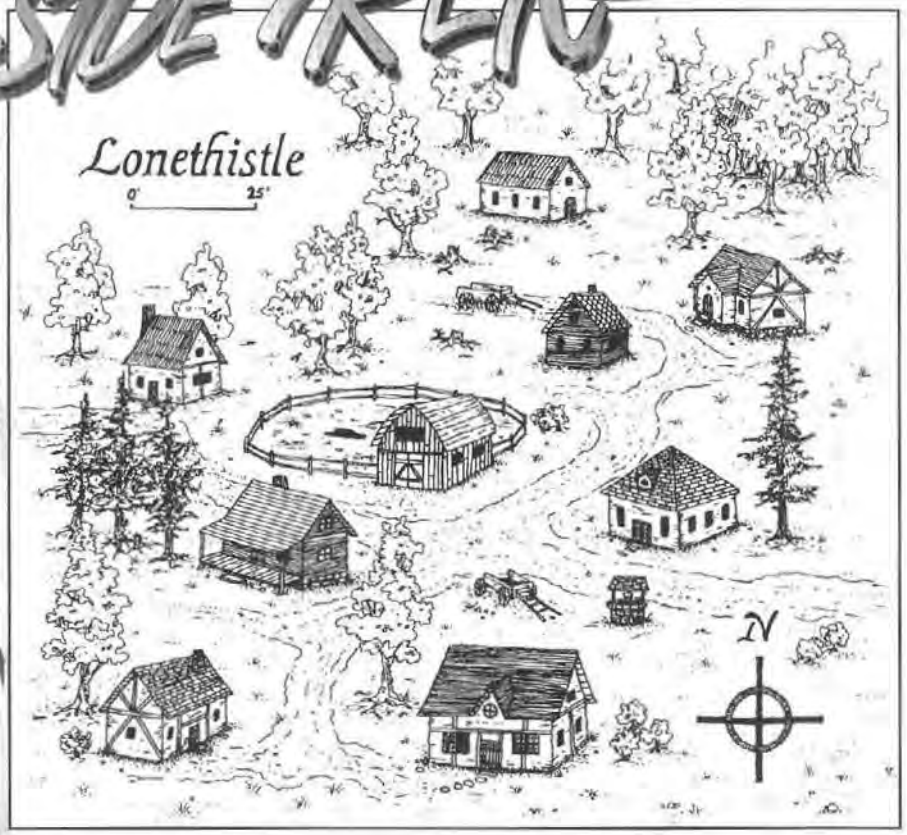
Further Adventures

Woody Glen was designed to provide a base for numerous adventures. The DM could easily map the silver mine and introduce a new silver rush, complete with prospectors wanting to hire the PCs as guards, or as investigators sent to explore the deep mines for underworld monsters.

Sebastian Manor could be haunted by other members of the Sebastian clan. Perhaps Father Turghan and his acolytes would enlist the characters to lay its many spirits to rest. Kamen or one of his associates might even require the harvest of more exotic ingredients, possibly even new types. But perhaps the most interesting adventure would involve the appearance of Morda's sister witches. Unknown to the PCs, Morda was but one witch in a coven whose surviving members would be very interested in finding out what has happened to their cohort, and who would also go to great lengths to recover the *cauldron of brewing*. Ω

By Matthew Guss

SIDE TREKS



BY LANCE HAWVERMALE

Cartography by Craig Zipse

"Eye of the Storm" is an AD&D® SideTrek adventure for a small but determined band of heroes from 6th to 8th level (about 28 total levels). The village of Lonethistle, as well as the churning thunderstorm that is soon to set upon it, can easily be placed in the path of any adventurers who find themselves in the country plains only minutes ahead of the rain.

The Village

> Roiling across the evening sky—thunderheads stacked like vast mountains—is a singularly ferocious storm. Lightning lances down from its black belly; thunder shakes the world. Trapped beneath the thunderstorm, the earth is stabbed by twisted fangs of blue-white lightning. Trees explode, deadwood flowers into flame, and the ground quivers. Your have been riding ahead of this earth-splitter for several hours, and your mounts are near the point of exhaustion. Up ahead, cradled there on the soft shoulders of the plains, you spot a village. The fury of the heavens threatens to rend the tiny hamlet into so much thatch and stone debris, but it's the only shelter in sight.

Due to no fault of its own, Lonethistle rests in the path of a freakish fit of nature known and feared by certain sages. The village elder and resident druid, a desperate, wistful old man named Thornwicket, has done all he can to slow the progress of the coming storm. But Thornwicket's store of miracles is spent, and still the lightning comes. The small populace is in a worried frenzy. Husbands frantically dig impromptu shelters for their families, wives corral their frightened children and batten down the hatches of their fragile homes. Dogs bolt from house to house, railing their indecipherable canine warnings. The wind has already begun to build, detritus blows between buildings, and shutters clamor against rickety walls.

Standing in the center of town, bent easy over a tired canvas satchel, the lightning rod salesman licks the air with his tongue. He tastes ozone there, his senses no less refined than the hackles of the dogs who feel in their bones the coming storm.

It isn't long before the presence of this sad stranger is made known to Thornwicket, just as the rain begins to fall. There, in the middle of the village, the two men talk, discuss terms, and cut a hasty deal. For a reasonable sum, twelve spears of wicked wrought-iron are purchased—talismans against the vengeance of the storm. His arms laden with lightning rods and wary of the rains suddenly crashing down in torrents around him, Thornwicket turns toward the village, scans the water-slick shingles and treacherous rooftops, and sighs. Then he spies the party of arriving adventurers and whispers a quick thanks to the heavens.

The Task

To succeed in this adventure and save the town from destruction, the heroes must somehow affix to the summit of every roof a lightning rod, grounding it in the turf so that the thunderbolts are channeled from the houses into the soil. As soon as the PCs enter Lonethistle, Thornwicket runs to them, arms spilling over with iron shafts. The druid implores the heroes to assist him in keeping the village protected against nature's wrath. The way to accomplish this, he claims, is by nailing a rod to the roof each and every building in Lonethistle—twelve structures in all. Meanwhile, the lightning rod salesman finds a comfortable seat from which to watch the show.

If the heroes balk at this task, use the visible effects of the approaching storm to convince them that their inactivity will indeed portend disaster for the village.

EYE OF THE STORM

Without the lightning rods, the fate of Lonethistle is surely sealed.

There is little time for debate or explanation. Either the heroes try to find shelter of their own to outlast the storm, or they agree to take on the task. The storm is upon them.

The Salesman and the Storm

Portrathos the lightning rod salesman sits in the midst of the monsoon, gray longcoat dripping, eyes like dark glass. His purse is heavy with coins from a score of villages like Lonethistle, towns to which he brought salvation ... and destruction.

Portrathos is an air-elementalist—bringer of terrible storms and seller of false hope. He travels the realm, bringing lightning storms in his wake, the result of several *control weather* spells and a decidedly deranged mind. Not only does Portrathos make a tidy profit with this meteorological enterprise, but he derives a considerable degree of personal pleasure from watching the lightning spoil the sad structures of mankind. Like a pyromaniac who sets the world aflame to satisfy his own thirst, so too does Portrathos cause storms to punish the earth to slake his own mad passions.

The storm is one of Portrathos' greatest coups. He recently managed to ensnare a cloud-dwelling colony of thunder children in the breadth of his storm. Now the thunder children travel in their airy caves and spill their vengeance on the land below.

Portrathos (9th-level human air elementalist): AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; W9; hp 31; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 13, D 10, C 15, I 15, W 12, Ch 10; SZ M; ML 14; XP 4,000; *bracers of defense AC 4, staff of thunder and lightning* (15 charges), *ring of spell storing* (*control weather* ×3). Spells: *color spray, feather fall, lasting breath, magic missile* (×2); *fog cloud, invisibility, ride the wind, stinking cloud; gust of wind, lightning bolt* (×2), *wind wall; ice storm, solid fog, spectral force; cloudkill, conjure air elemental.*

Fighting the Storm

When the heroes agree to accept the task of saving the town, the following rules come into play. After a PC spends at least one round climbing up to a building's roof, a lightning rod may be installed by spending one more round with hammer and nails. Thornwicket can provide such tools for every member of the party. Keep strict track of how many rounds the characters spend in such pursuits. The storm disgorges its lightning at specific intervals. Once a lightning rod is fastened to a roof's peak, it can be grounded as soon as the hero climbs down, with the expenditure of one more game round. The effects of the storm are as follows:

1. The wind blows at 70 miles per hour. Long-range missle fire is impossible; medium range suffers a –6 attack roll penalty; short range attacks are –3 to hit.

- Attack rolls are all made at –2.
- Movement is reduced by half.
- Climbing checks are made at –25% due to the stiff wind.

2. Every round, there is a 50% chance of a gust of wind occurring. This gale renders all missile attacks impossible for the extent of that round, and all melee attempts are made at –4. Furthermore, characters unsecured to open rooftops must make a successful Strength check at –2 to avoid being blown to the ground for 2d6 hp damage.

3. Additionally, there is a 35% chance per round that a stroke of lightning will tear itself free from the heavens and smash into one of the nine buildings in the village. Roll 1d10 and check the status of that particular building. (A roll of "0" indicates that the lightning has struck a cart, a tree, or other minor feature.) An unprotected building struck by lightning suffers 5 points of structural damage and promptly catches fire, driving out the 1d6 people within. The fire will do 1d2 structural points of damage to the building per round until the rains douse the flames in 1d6 rounds. Each building has 10 structural points.

If a hapless character finds himself on a rooftop, in a tree, or under a cart when a bolt crashes into it, he becomes a living lightning rod, taking a sizzling 10d6 hit points of damage (saving throw versus wands for half damage).

If a lightning rod rides the roof, the electricity is grounded and the building is safe.

4. The constant rain can further limit both visibility and climbing checks as the DM deems appropriate. Visibility reduced by half and a –15% penalty on climbing checks is not unreasonable. (This is in addition to the –25% penalty imposed by the wind. See **1.** above.)

5. Finally, there are the thunder children with whom to contend. When the thunder children see that their beloved lightning is being thwarted by ground-dwellers with iron sticks, they promptly engage those groundlings in combat, arriving in 2d4+4 rounds.

Thunder children (4): INT average (10); AL NE; AC –1; MV 6, Fl 18 (A); HD 7; hp 49, 43, 39, 33; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SA Special; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ S; ML 10; XP 2,000; *MC14*.

In addition to the damage caused by the thunder children's bite, the victim must also make a save versus spell, with failure indicating an additional 10 hp of electrical damage. The thunder children each have the following spells available to them,

continued on page 68

A winged snake startles the heroes in Hill's Edge.

TRAINING GROUND

BY RICK MAFFEI

Choose your path

Artwork by Rags Morales
Cartography by Diesel

Rick works as a production editor, attends Fairleigh Dickinson University at night (completing his Bachelor degree in Broadcast Communications) and hosts a weekly Blues show on WFDU-FM radio.

"Training Ground" is an AD&D® adventure for 3–6 player characters of levels 5–8 (about 30 total levels). At least one member of the party should have a magical weapon of +1 or greater enchantment, and the adventuring party should include at least one mage or single-classed spellcaster.

This adventure was designed for experienced players. Careless adventurers seeking death in the training ground find their search easy indeed. It is recommended that players use familiar characters of sufficient level and not use PCs created from scratch just for this adventure.

The adventure begins just outside the city of Hill's Edge in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® fantasy setting. This adventure can also be converted for use with the GREYHAWK® setting; simply change all references regarding the Zhentarim to the Scarlet Brotherhood, and alter references from Netheril to Suel.

The DM may wish to use the following resources to add more atmosphere and background: *The Ruins of Zhentil Keep* for information on the Zhentarim, *Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast* for details about Hill's Edge and Sunset Vale, and *Netheril: Empire of Magic* boxed set for further details.

Adventure Background

What is now recognized as the Western Heartlands was once, long ago, the kingdom of Netheril. Netheril was known for its powerful magic, and eventually it was magic that spelled Netheril's demise.

Before the fall of Netheril, there was a Netherese mage of some power named Orokoth. Orokoth was a human of evil bent, and he taught and trained many lesser mages the ways of magic, twisting others to his own ends. The most promising apprentices were subjected to a dangerous test of their skill when reaching a certain level of training. Transported into an underground

labyrinth, their only task was to emerge alive. Survivors were allowed to serve Orokoth as free mages and stood to gain great power and considerable wealth in his campaigns.

In this way, Orokoth weeded out the weak from the strong of his flock. Occasionally, young mages that showed too much promise were also sent into the deadly training ground before they were ready, ending any possible threats to Orokoth's position without direct conflict. Orokoth continued to alter and perfect his gauntlet of death, adding more traps and animated creatures to kill the unwary. Eventually, Orokoth traveled to another plane on a routine mission to gather spell components and did not return. It is very possible he died or was trapped by a creature of greater power, but his final fate is unknown.

For the DM

Recently, agents of the Zhentarim working in the Hill's Edge region stumbled across the secret teleportation area that allowed access to the ancient Netherese training ground. The agents anxiously sent word back to Darkhold and awaited further orders. They did not have to wait long.

A gatherer of lost magic and arcana, the wizard Sememmon of Darkhold immediately ordered two subordinate mages to teleport to the site and accompany the three Zhentarim agents into the ruin. Sememmon felt it was vital that the Zhentarim claim any and all magics as soon as possible, lest the Cult of the Dragon, the Red Wizards, or the Harpers claim them instead.

The initial foray into the Netherese ruin was not promising. The group of men had been ordered to enter, claim what magic they could, and report back within three days. When five days elapsed without word, Sememmon used magical means to track the agents and found them still inside the ruin. All attempts to view inside the ruin magically met with failure. Fearing the worst, Sememmon dispatched a message to another nearby agent of Darkhold, ordering him to gather a group of Zhentilar troops and investigate immediately.

Unfortunately for Sememmon, all does not go according to plan ...

The Training Ground

The training ground is located approximately 300 feet underground. The walls, ceiling, and floors of the gauntlet are constructed of solid stone, but some rooms have a layer of sandy dirt on the floor. The air is stale but breathable; Orokoth created several tiny gates that occasionally pull in fresh air from above ground.

Orokoth took great care to keep his gauntlet a 'fair' one for the mages involved, and he treated the training ground with powerful spells to prevent cheating. It is impossible to scry into or out of the ruins. In addition, the following wizard spells do not function inside the training ground: *dimension door, Leomund's secure shelter, magic mirror, passwall, stone shape, teleport, transmute rock to mud, phase door, shadow walk, astral spell.* Priest spells and psionics that duplicate these magical effects are not affected and work normally within the dungeon.

Beginning the Adventure

At the start of the adventure, the PCs have been looking for work in the city of Hill's Edge. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> You've come to Hill's Edge, a place widely known as a center of adventuring activity. Large caravans rumble into town constantly, heading for the many warehouses in the center of the city.
>
> The townsfolk are a wary lot, and work has not been forthcoming. Most trade stalls are directly inside the city walls, but recently a small open market has sprung up near the city center—as likely a place as any to secure employment. The market is crowded with merchants, traders and motley folk. None of the many patrons has approached your group with offers of employment; in fact, no one has paid much attention to your group at all. Now, as the vendors begin to pack up their wares, your hopes of gaining work are fading with the setting sun.
>
> While scouting the area, you've taken notice of a suspicious figure. A dark robed man, lean and menacing, has been standing in a nearby alley entrance for the last two hours. The man sports a well-trimmed beard and wears several belt pouches, but he has no bodyguards. He has not been without company, however.
>
> Periodically, various sordid characters have approached the alley where the man stands, and quiet conversation has followed. After a short time, the conversation ends and the robed, bearded figure hands a small bag of coins to the newcomer. The newcomer then beats a hasty exit, leaving the robed man alone again until his next visitor arrives. Three times this has occurred.
>
> The robed man bears no open insignia, but he reeks of Zhentarim business. Every so often he glances your way, coldly appraising your group.

Allow the party a moment more to survey their surroundings before continuing:

> A young man of no more than fourteen winters approaches the robed man in the shadows. The boy is garbed in the clothes of a poor farmhand. The robed man listens to the boy for a moment and then dismisses him rudely. The lad exits the market, a nervous smile on his lips.
>
> Moments later, a startled expression flows across the cruel features of the robed man, followed by a foul oath as he discovers his purse strings cut. He seizes a passing goodwife by the wrist, pulling her downward until they are nose to nose. The man seems to accuse her of something, and she struggles and pleads. The robed man then loudly exclaims, "The boy!" Revelation floods his dark features. Hurling the woman aside, he gives a last suspicious glare in your direction before charging into a side alley after the young boy, murder flickering in his eyes.

If the PCs decide to follow the pair, use the following boxed text. Characters of good alignment should be concerned for the boy's safety. If the PCs are slow to follow the pair,

one PC discover that his purse or a small magical item has also been stolen—this may help encourage party pursuit.

> Surrounding the market is a maze of streets and alleys. To make matters worse, a light rain is beginning to fall. As you ponder your next move, a boy's scream erupts from the nearest alley.

The PCs can reach the alley in a moment, if they so desire. Continue to read or paraphrase the following:

> You have entered a narrow, dirty lane that extends behind some warehouses. A strong, smoky stench fills the narrow alley.
>
> You can see the black-robed man standing over the still body of the would-be thief. The thief is sprawled on his back, one arm laying over his face. His shoulder is scorched, and he still clutches the remains of the leather purse; behind him is a blackened area of brick and a few small fires that are quickly being extinguished by the rain.
>
> You barely have time to take in this scene when the robed figure whirls to face you! A dagger juts from his shoulder, and his robes are smeared with blood. As you stare in disbelief, he completes a series of hand gestures, and a brilliant flaming globe appears in his outstretched palm.

The robed man is Dalmanu, a Zhentarim wizard dispatched from Darkhold to keep an eye on happenings in Hill's Edge. There are many other spies located in the city, but Dalmanu is not aware of their identities. He has remained in the city for several weeks, paying the local riff-raff for information he has been unable to gather himself. A mage of no small ability, he has grown cocky as of late and has undertaken crimes of his own to gather magic items and increase his personal might. Unknown to Dalmanu, Sememmon is well aware of these activities, but he considers Dalmanu a promising talent to be nurtured for the time being.

At the moment Dalmanu is furious, as he is unaccustomed to being a victim of robbery. He chased the thief here, cornering him in this dead-end alley. The terrified boy managed to wound Dalmanu with a thrown dagger, but this only inflamed the mage's anger. Dalmanu responded with lethal resolve, casting *flamespin* and hurling the fiery creation.

By sheer luck, the boy twisted away at the right moment and caught but a fraction of the missile. Singed but alive, the thief is currently "playing possum." The characters might assume the boy is dead until they can check his condition.

Heedless of his own safety, the evil mage attacks the PCs, assuming them to be thieves as well. Dalmanu has dealt with magic-bearing adventurers in the past; if the characters identify themselves, he continues the attack and attempts to gain some magic for his trouble today.

Almon (boy): AL CG; AC 8; MV 12; T1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 9, D 16, C 14, I 13, W 8, Ch 14; ML 9; XP 120 (only if rescued); dagger (thrown).

Dalmanu: AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; W7; hp 24 (27 at full); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 13, D 16, C 11, I 17, W 15, Ch 12; ML 13; XP 1,400.

Spells: *detect magic, flamespin* (already cast; refer to *FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventures* sourcebook), *spider climb, wall of fog; alter self, mirror image, pyrotechnics; lightning bolt, Melf's minute meteors; Caligarde's claw.*

Dalmanu wears a *ring of protection +1* and carries a *wand of magic missiles* with 22 charges remaining. He also carries two normal daggers on his belt. The remaining purse on his belt holds 24 gp and 11 garnets worth 20 gp each. His spellbook is not on his person; it is hidden in a locked inn room elsewhere.

Dalmanu cast *Melf's minute meteors* as the party approached. He throws one meteor per round, following up with a *Caligarde's claw* spell on the nearest apparent spellcaster. Afterward, Dalmanu uses his wand, keeping PC fighters at a distance if at all possible.

If wounded below 12 hp, Dalmanu attempts to retreat by casting either *pyrotechnics* (creating smoke from the smoldering fires) or *wall of fog* to obscure the area, followed by *spider climb*. He then climbs twenty feet up the nearest wall and casually moves sideways past the characters and out of the alley. He then tosses his black overcloak aside and uses *alter self* to change his appearance if he still feels the party may follow him.

If Dalmanu is wounded by the PCs and escapes, the characters will have earned themselves a vengeful foe.

PCs searching the area around the boy find a only few gold pieces scattered about, some melted by the heat. If any items were stolen from the characters, the items might be found under the garbage nearby. Clutched in the boy's hand (unnoticed by Dalmanu in his rage) is a singed but intact strip of paper. Printed on the paper in a spidery script is the word "VUNTAR."

Almon

If questioned, Almon admits to taking Dalmanu's purse, claiming (truthfully) that he needed to feed two younger siblings who are staying with an elderly aunt. Almon's parents are deceased, and he supports his family through theft. He also mentions, if asked, that the strip of paper came from Dalmanu's purse.

Originally unaware of the true nature of his target, Almon now fears for his life and asks to tag along with the party. Even if the PCs slay Dalmanu, Almon remains fearful. He has watched spies come to Dalmanu for money, and he approached Dalmanu today in desperation, hoping to make some quick cash. When Dalmanu refused him, he stole the purse in anger before his better judgment warned him of his folly—by then, it was far too late.

If the PCs allow Almon to accompany them, he follows them doggedly, even into potentially dangerous situations. As he heals, his thieving instincts resurface, and various characters may begin "losing" things at the DMs option. Almon does not steal from characters who behave like older siblings. The DM might wish to play up this last note as a humorous aside, as characters are plagued by the constant hero-worship of a reckless 14-year-old thief.

When the party has finished their search of the area, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

A soft flapping sound fills the alley. Overhead, a snake with bluish-black scales and feathered wings flies through the drizzle, bearing a scroll tube in its coils. Before your eyes, the snake's color suddenly changes to a metallic green shade. Its tongue flicks out once, testing the air, and then it speaks. "Greetingsss. If you're Dalmanu, ssspeak the word."

The creature is a messenger snake, a Zhentarim courier. It has brought a message from Darkhold for Dalmanu. Its senses have tracked his magical aura and unique smell to this alley, but it cannot determine which person is Dalmanu. It is requesting Dalmanu's password.

If any PC utters the word "Vuntar," the snake approaches that individual and releases the scroll. It then leaves, not staying to answer questions or enter into conversation.

If the PCs indicate that Dalmanu is dead or has departed, the snake departs without further utterances. If a PC says more to the snake than the password, claiming to be Dalmanu or the like, there is a 50% chance the snake is using its *detect lie* ability and discovers the deceit.

The snake speaks Common but does not enjoy conversation with humans. This messenger snake is intelligent but lazy; it cares more about obeying the letter of its commands than the intent. If confronted, it always attempts to flee rather than fight, changing its body color to match the sky. If attacked and injured while airborne, there is a 75% chance it drops the scroll in its haste to escape.

If the party does not capture the scroll, this adventure is over. The Zhentarim eventually find out who was responsible for Dalmanu's demise or injury and seek the party out. Almon, a city native, recognizes the snake as a Zhentarim messenger.

If the party captures the scroll-tube, it contains a small note written in a florid hand. At this time, show players **Graphic #1** (see page 38).

The triangle and circle symbol is the mage sigil of Sememmon. The "great enemy" referred to in the snake's scroll is Elminster of Shadowdale.

Those familiar with the area can calculate that the trip to the path will take a full day on horse (two on foot) from the party's current location at Hill's Edge. If the party is heavily burdened and going by foot, the trip could take as long as two and a half days.

Sememmon's Schedule

Sememmon is not a patient man. He waits for two days; if he does not receive the prearranged "I have arrived and conquered" signal from Dalmanu, he teleports three assistants directly to the pathway location.

These fellows are cold, experienced professionals and are completely ruthless, quite experienced working as a team. The mage Nyth, assigned as team leader, commands two specialty priests of Cyric. The group is also accompanied by a bonebat—an obedient "pet" of the lesser priest, Dardres.

Nyth is aware that Sememmon's efforts to scry into the ruins have met with failure. He has already decided that the easiest way for his team to grab the glory for themselves is by killing Dalmanu and claiming he was lost inside the ruins. The trio wait at least a day outside the ruins for Dalmanu before venturing inside. If the player characters are slow exploring or leaving the ruins, it is a certainty they will encounter this dangerous group when they emerge.

Day 1: Sememmon dispatches the initial group of agents;

Day 5: Sememmon, not hearing from the first group, sends his messenger snake with a scroll for Dalmanu;

Day 6: The messenger snake arrives at Hill's Edge, and characters intercept Sememmon's message. The adventure begins here;

Day 8: Sememmon *teleports* a new group of agents (Nyth, et al.) directly to ruin.

Nyth "Greycloak" Arilanther: AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; W7; hp 21; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 10, D 17, C 16, I 18, W 11, Ch 12; ML 14; XP 2,000; *rod of smiting* (29 charges remaining), *dagger +2*, potion of *extra healing*, belt knife, 12 pp, 14 gp, 21 sp, wears gold ring set with topaz stone (worth 200 gp). Spells: *burning hands, charm person, dancing lights, shocking grasp, sleep; detect good, glitterdust, summon swarm, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter; fly, hold person, monster summoning I; Evard's black tentacles, missile mastery*[4].

[4] Replace with *confusion* spell if you do not have the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventures* sourcebook.

Dardres Halamer: AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; C4; hp 26; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 13, D 9, C 10, I 13, W 17, Ch 15; ML 13; XP 420; *long sword +1, bag of bones* (contains five human bones; see sidebar on page 45), chain mail, shield, dagger, 34 gp, 18 ep, 4 sp.

Spells: *cause light wounds, command* (×2), *curse, endure cold/heat; enthrall, hold person, know alignment, obscurement.*

Laerdan Istus: AL CE; AC 5; MV 12; C3; hp 21; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 14, D 14, C 17, I 11, W 16, Ch 12; ML 12; XP 175; mace, chain mail, dagger, 27 sp.

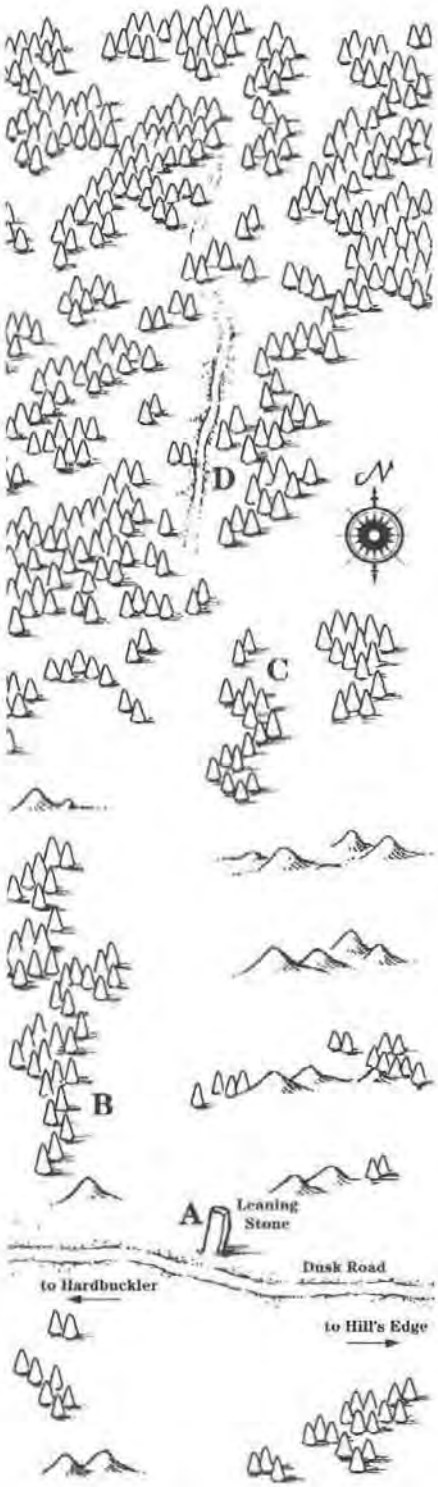
Spells: *cause fear, cure light wounds, detect good, sanctuary; dust devil, know alignment, silence 15' radius.*

As specialty priests of Cyric, Dardres and Laerdan are granted the following powers:

- Gain +1 to saving throws vs. illusions and phantasms;
- Unaffected by *fear* spells and emotion-altering spells save *charm.*

Bonebat: INT low; AL NE; AC 7; MV 3, Fl 18 (C); HD 4; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SA paralyzation (does not affect elves); SD never surprised; half damage from edged and piercing weapons; immune to paralysis, *charm, sleep* and *hold*; turned as ghoul; SZ S; ML 20; XP 975; *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Annual, Volume Three*/11.

Messenger snake (1): INT very; AL N; AC 4; MV 6, Fl 24 (B); HD 3; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6; SA poison; SD chameleon power; SZ S (2' long); ML 11; XP 975; *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Annual, Volume Three*/95.



Training Ground
One inch = 5 miles

Wilderness Encounters

A. The Leaning Stone.

At this landmark, the party must leave the Dusk Road and head north toward Dusk Wood. The Leaning Stone itself is a huge slab of grey stone, approximately nine feet high, five feet wide, and three feet thick. It weighs several tons. The lower faces of the slab bear worn graffiti added by passing merchants over the years. The Stone is something of a local landmark, but its exact origin and how it was brought here is a complete mystery.

B. The Lone Ranger.

> Out of the corner of your eye, you spot a silent figure riding a lean horse. He is emerging from the nearby tree cover—a man dressed in worn leathers, over which is thrown a dark green cloak spotted with trail mud. A huge sword is strapped to his back, and he wears an unusual amulet around his neck. His light brown hair is tangled, he is unshaven, and there are dark circles under his eyes; yet he appears fully alert and shows no sign of fatigue. He calmly eyes your group.

This lone figure is quietly making his way to Corm Orp, on a secret spy mission for Cormyr. Having spotted the party, he observes them for a time before silently proceeding on his way. He is mounted on a **light warhorse** (hp 18) that has been trained to move quietly and remain calm in any pitched battle.

Rogart Perilhaven: AL NG; AC 5 (studded leather, Dexterity); MV 12; R9; hp 72; THAC0 12; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; S 14; D 16; C 17; I 13; W 17; Ch 16; ML 16; *broad sword +2*, long bow, 20 flight arrows, three silver-tipped flight arrows, dagger, 40 gp, 54 sp. He also wears a *greenstone amulet* (c.f. FR4 or replace with an *amulet of life protection*) and a *ring of the ram*.

Strapped to Rogart's warhorse is his medium shield, a 60' coil of rope, and a saddlebag holding provisions (equivalent to dry rations). Painted on the shield is the Perilhaven crest: a dragonne rousant on a plain (vert) field with a semi-circle of nine stars overhead.

Rogart follows his own agenda and is loyal to King Azoun IV of Cormyr. If approached, he converses for a moment before continuing on his private mission. He does not reveal his purpose or accept company in his travels under any circumstances, instead maintaining that he is heading for Hill's Edge on business.

Rogart is amicable and polite but says little, hoping to learn what he can of others. He has had dangerous encounters with adventurer companies in the past, and he considers adventurers an undisciplined lot in general, not to be trusted easily. Rogart is patient, but he does not waste time with those he deems as evil or foolish.

He knows Dusk Wood well, but he will refer to the patch of forest only as "Reluvethel's Wood," after the elven ranger of legend. If asked, he can direct the party toward the path they seek, and he will warn the party that goblins and worgs have been spotted where they are headed. Rogart knows of the path, but not its origins or how it functions. He can only relate the location of the path, and the fact that the local wood elves consider it to be ancient and linked to dangerous magic of an unknown sort.

C. Goblin Party. This group of six goblins are armed and riding on vicious worgs. These fellows are scouts for a larger tribe that lurks deep within the Dusk Wood. One goblin stands out; he is garbed in tattered robes streaked with stripes of russet clay and adorned with feathers. This goblin wears a headdress likewise festooned with small bones and feathers—he is a 4th level shaman and commands the group.

All the goblins are armed with short swords. Additionally, two of the goblins are armed with spears that they hurl before closing on the party. The goblins retreat at the sight of powerful magic, unless the proud shaman has been insulted or directly challenged. In the latter case, the shaman orders the goblins to continue the attack.

If the shaman is killed or rendered helpless, the surviving goblins retreat. Fleeing goblins return to the area 1d4 hours later with twelve additional goblin warriors and four more worgs.

These goblins left their valuables back at camp, with one exception: the shaman wears a small deer-gut bag on a thong around his neck. The bag is covered with grime and not easily noticed. The bag contains three perfect bloodstones (worth 60 gp each).

Goblins (5): INT low; AL LE; AC 6; MV 6; HD 1–1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6 (short sword or spear); SZ S; ML 10; XP 15; *MM*/163.

Gedreth (shaman): INT 11; AL LE; AC 6; MV 6; HD 4; hp 20; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6 (by weapon); SA spells; SZ S; ML 13; XP 120; *MM*/163.

Spells: *cure light wounds, faerie fire, protection from good; flame blade, obscurement.*

Worgs (6): INT low; AL NE; AC 6; MV 18; HD 3+3; hp 24 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SZ L; ML 11; XP 120; *MM*/362 (wolf).

D. The Path. At this point in the woods lies a short overgrown path, its stones barely discernible. There are five flat stones in all, becoming steadily more overgrown as they lead north. The first four stones bear small chiselled runes. These runes represent the four apprentice wizards of Orokoth. Show players **Graphic #2** at this time.

If the runes are touched in the following order—Uhalos ("Spider"), Sustren ("Arrowhead"), Quadras ("Eye"), Negala ("Snake")—a magical *gate* appears above the fifth (northernmost) stone. The gate is invisible, but its activation causes all four sigils to glow bright red. Any living creatures passing over the fifth stone are teleported 300 feet underground to the Entry Chamber of Orokoth's Training Ground (see area **1**). After one turn, the sigils' glow fades and the *gate* disappears.

Each character has a 25% chance (75% if searching) of noticing a trailmark carved on a dead tree stump nearby. (Show players **Graphic #3**.) This is an old-style ranger trailmark, placed here long ago. The trailmark, known as "the horns of evil," indicates a place of evil beings or evil magic. Rangers, sages, or characters with an intelligence of 15 or greater have a 5% chance per level to recognize and understand the trailmark. *Legend lore* or similar divination magic also reveals the meaning of the ranger's trailmark.

Lurking near the path is a thirst of twelve hungry stirges. They attack all but the most heavily armored characters, seeking blood. A clever party might drive these creatures away by waving torches or creating a large fire.

Stirges (12): INT animal; AL N; AC 8; MV 3, Fl 18 (C); HD 1+1; hp 6 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–3; SA drain blood for 1–4 hp per round (12 hp maximum); SZ S (2' wingspan); ML 8; XP 175; *MM*/332.

The Training Ground

1. Entry Chamber. The PCs are *teleported* into a small chamber approximately 30' square. The party stands in the center, directly atop a mosaic. The tiles are multi-colored and form a path leading to one wall. To the west and east are niches; standing in each is a 2' tall statuette on a 3' high square pedestal. The white marble statuettes are carved in the likeness of spellcasting mages.

The statuettes each contain a treasure meant for investigative mages to discover. The west statue is a female human mage in robes, with her hands held overhead. Careful inspection and a successful Intelligence check at –2 will reveal a seam along one shoulder; if pulled, the arm will pivot. If the arm is pulled down, the top half of the statue comes apart and reveals a rolled up scroll bound with red cord. Written on the magic-user scroll are the spells *dispel magic, hold undead*, and *water breathing* (all cast at 7th-level).

The eastern statue represents a male elven mage of stern disposition, pointing a wand at waist height. This statue likewise contains an item meant to assist the party. If the statue is lifted from its scamillus, a small recess is revealed that contains a *ring of fire resistance*. The ring appears to be a plain silver band of minor worth, set with a single tiny jacinth.

Characters walking on the mosaic path can pass through the north wall, continuing onward. The north wall is not illusory, but the magic of the path allows passage.

Note: If the party enters this room from the north with the special black sapphire from area **23**, a booming voice utters: "Well done, mage. You have proved your worth and may join great Orokoth. Remember the lessons you have learned here, and serve him well." The holder of the sapphire and all other characters in the room are healed 2d6 hp before being *teleported* to the surface in a blinding flash of white light. This is the only way out of the training ground unless the party uses the malfunctioning *gate* in area **S15**.

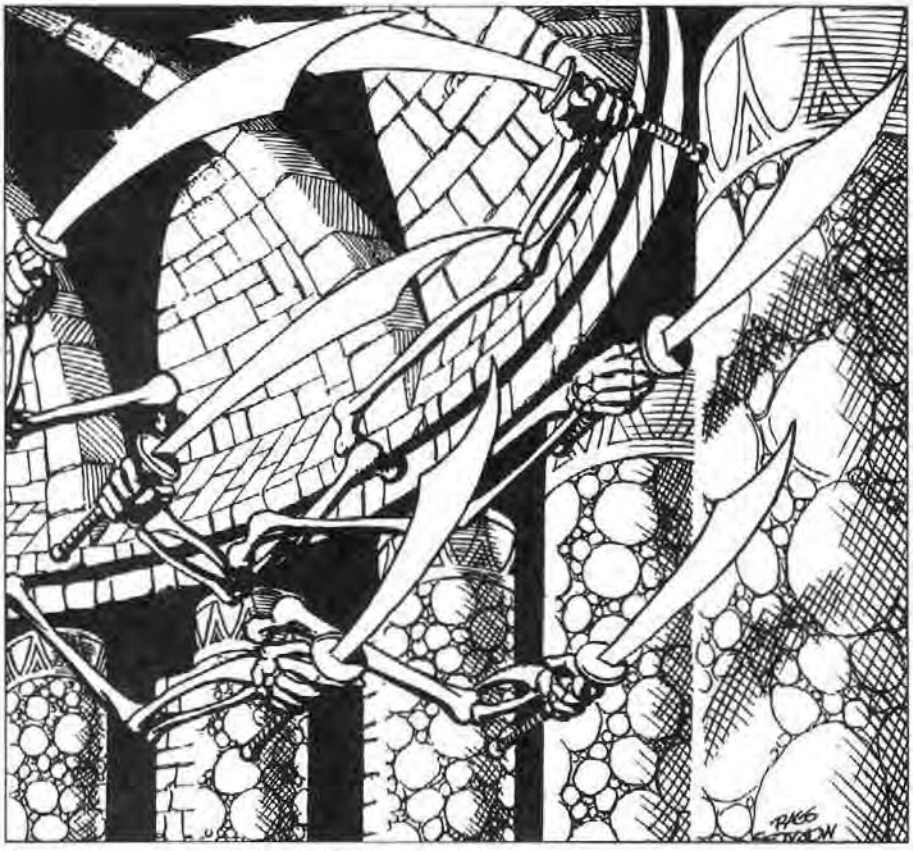
2. Chamber of Decision. This rectangular room can only be entered via the tile path. In the northern portion of this empty chamber are three stone doors. Above each door is a message, written in Thorass. The message above the west door reads: PATH OF STRENGTH, the north: PATH OF WITS, and the east: PATH OF OBSTACLES. As the PCs reach the center of the chamber, a voice sounds out of the air in Common: "Your objective lies ahead. Choose your path wisely, stripling. Those who succeed will join me. Those who fail will die." If the party delays for more than a turn, the message will sound again. The voice is a spell, triggered by the presence of living creatures in the room. The voice doesn't respond to questions or responses. The doors easily swing open at a touch, but if one is door opened, the others cannot be opened until the first door is closed. The stone doors reflect all magic back 100% at the source.

Characters can easily pass back into area **1** by walking through the center portion of the southern wall, if they so desire.

Note: From this point onward, room numbers are prefixed with a '**S**', '**W**' or '**O**' to indicate the path to which that room corresponds. Rooms without a letter prefix do not correspond to any specific path.

S3. Dread Chamber.

Dual rows of pillars run west to east down the center of the hall, ending near a huge stone door set into the far wall. The north and south walls are flanked with pilasters, set even with the pillars. The pillars and pilasters are fluted and carved of veined black marble. As you enter, something floats out of the darkness ahead—several skeletal arms! A howling wind rushes through the hall.



Six dreads emerge from the darkness.

The wind is magical, and acts as the *gust of wind* spell in all respects (as if cast at 19th-level). The wind lasts for one round. Note that most conventional light sources will probably be extinguished unless shielded, and infravision will not betray the positions of the attacking dreads.

The six defending dreads are armed with scimitars. They attack anyone stepping more than a single pace into the area. Once activated, they continue to attack until they or the intruders are destroyed. Anyone remaining outside the hall will not be attacked unless that person casts spells or initiates hostile action. The dreads do not follow PCs out of the room, but will do their utmost to prevent anyone for crossing the chamber.

The dreads guard no obvious valuables, but there is a secret panel on one of the northern pillars. The panel is placed high on the pillar and is cunningly crafted; non-elven PCs searching the room have a 1 in 8 chance to spot this hidden door. A successful Find Traps roll also reveals the compartment. Tucked inside the tiny hiding place is a black cloth bag holding three *beads of force*. The beads are Netherese and do not radiate magic, despite their power.

Dreads (6): INT non-; AL N; AC 6; MV 6, Fl 14 (B), Sw 10; HD 3+3; hp 17 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8 (scimitar) or 1–4; ML 13; XP 650; *Monstrous Compendium Annual, Volume One*.

S4. High Ledges. A sloping ledge of grey stone leads from the floor, curving along the west wall for more than 40 feet and growing steeper before running along the north wall and terminating at an exit near the ceiling. On the east side of the room are jagged rock ledges of varied heights and shapes. Most of the eastern ledges are roughly 25' above the floor, the lowest being seven feet from the floor and the highest 40' high. Silver pieces and bones have been strewn about the lower ledges.

Hidden in the shadows, far back on a large ledge, is a *stasis bubble*. As party members begin their assent up the curving ledge, the bubble bursts, releasing an angry manticore from imprisonment. This creature will emerge absolutely furious from his captivity, seeking to slay any living creatures nearby. The monster will fly clumsily into the air and launch two volleys of tail spikes at intruders before closing for combat. Its years of imprisonment have left it deranged; it does not cease attacking until it or all intruders are slain.

PCs struck by missiles (including tail spikes) and wounded for 4 hp damage or more must make a Dexterity check at +2 or fall off the narrow, smooth ledge. Falling damage depends on the ledge height; assume the ledge rises approximately 10' per 10' map square traveled, to a maximum height of 60 feet near the exit.

Former failed apprentices of Orokoth have left some treasure on the southern ledges, along with their remains. There is a total of 16 ancient Netherese silver pieces on the two lowest ledges. These coins could fetch 20 gp apiece from a sage or antiquarian in any large city. In addition, on the third ledge up (approximately 16 feet above floor level) is a scroll tube fashioned of ivory, not easily distinguishable from the many bones. The scroll tube is worth 300 gp; it holds a magical scroll with the spells *detect evil, hold vapor*, ice lance**, and *ice storm*. All spells are written at the 7th level of ability; spells with an asterisk are described in the *Forgotten Realms Adventures* book and can be replaced with spells from the *PHB*.

Manticore: INT low; AL LE; AC 4; MV 12, Fl 18 (E); HD 6+3; hp 39; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1–3/1–3/1–8; SA tail spikes; SZ H; ML 19; XP 975; *MM*/246.

S5. Bleeder Lair.

This chamber is small and square in shape. The walls here are inscribed with wavy lines, swirls, and cloud-like shapes. The wall edges are likewise decorated with vitruvian scrollwork. The floor is made up of large tiles made of a grey material set with tiny, sparkling flecks.

Floating above the tiles in the center of the room is a huge,

cragged boulder of some sort. There are no other objects in the room. An exit door is visible across the way.

The floating "boulder" is actually a living death kiss beholder. The death kiss, or bleeder, is extremely old; it was placed here by Orokoth long ago. Lack of food has forced the bleeder into hibernation. It is currently in a state of coma, and it doesn't react to the presence of adventurers. If struck, shocked, or burned for 5 hp or more damage, it immediately awakens. Regardless of the cause, the irritable and hungry death kiss strikes out at anyone disturbing it, seeking fresh blood after its long sleep.

Death kiss: INT high; AL NE; AC 4/6/8; MV Fl 9 (B); HD 10; hp 70 (body), 6 (central eye), 6 (per tentacle stalk); THAC0 11; #AT 10; Dmg 1–8 per tentacle; SA blood drain; SD regeneration; SZ H (10' diameter); ML 17; XP 8,000; *MM*/21 (beholder).

W6. Tiled Chamber. This rectangular chamber is devoid of furniture and occupants. The walls and ceiling are plain gray stone, but the floor has been set with large ceramic tiles that separate the floor into various colored areas. The narrow strip near the entry point and also by the far door is composed of plain gray stone without tiles of any color.

The tiles are 2' square. Characters carefully examining either end of a colored area of floor will discover a tiny picture carved into each tile. The red tiles all bear a tiny representation of a staff or walking stick. The green tiles are carved with swords. The white central tiles are carved with a circular talisman or holy symbol. The black tiles clearly depict a dagger with a wavy blade, and a drop of something dripping from its tip.

Each tiled path represents a profession. The staff represent mages and sages. The long sword indicates fighters, soldiers, and mercenaries. The holy symbol represents clerics and priests of all faiths. The poisoned dagger indicates the profession of thieves. Orokoth believed mages to be superior to those of any other profession and constructed this room to punish any apprentices not sharing this belief. The room was also constructed as a lesson to be observant at all times.

The red tiles can be walked across without incident. If any other tiled path is chosen, nothing happens until the lead character is halfway across, at which time the surrounding tiles of that chosen color swing upwards. The upward motion of the tiles is caused by an army of crawling claws scampering forth, one from each tile, ten from each section. The claws attack until destroyed, but they do not leave the room. The claws appear to be skeletal human hands. These tiles cannot be swung upward unless "triggered" (releasing the claws) or a *knock* spell is used. Once the claws have emerged, the hinged tiles are lifted easily.

Crawling claws (30): INT non-; AL N; AC 7; MV 9; HD 1d4 hp; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6 (unarmored foes) or 1–4 (armored foes); MR immune to mind-affecting spells; SZ S; ML 19; XP 35; *MM*/48.

W7. The Library.

This octagonal chamber appears to be some sort of library or reading room. Tall bookcases are positioned against the west and east walls. In the center of the room rests a polished rosewood table flanked by two long benches. There is a open book on the table. Standing just west of the south door is a suit of ornate, fluted plate armor. In the northeast corner is a desk and a comfortable, padded chair. Atop the desk is a quill pen, a stack of parchment sheets held down by an obsidian paperweight (round and carved with a unknown sigil), a tin coffer, and a pipe in a holder. Beneath the desk is a small wooden box. The room is lit by two floating globes of light which give off a medium-intensity light.

The globes of light are actually 2' glass spheres with *levitate* and *continual light* spells cast on them.

Most books here deal with subjects such as meteorology, history, and non-magical animal life. Those willing to spend more than two turns searching here discover two tomes of value, detailed below:

• *1,001 Traps: Devious Mechanical Devices* by Ilogg Tremain. One page in this book is obviously dog-eared. Described on this page is a roller trap, identical to the roller trap in area **O20**. Characters studying this page should be given a description of the roller trap and told about how they may avoid damage by leaping to the safe area. Note that the pendulum trap is not detailed in this work.

• *Gemstones* by Jeddan Togi. This work is actually a false book; the inside has been hollowed out, leaving a hidden cavity for storing valuables. Currently inside the recess is a flawed amethyst (800 gp), a topaz (1,000 gp) and a king's tear. The king's tear is a clear, tear-shaped jewel; if it is closely inspected, an image of a beautiful, long-haired woman can be seen. Only the woman's head and shoulders are visible, but her gown's style and her odd jewelry date back nearly a millennia! The woman's tresses are braided in an unusual style; the rest of her hair hangs loosely about her shoulders. She has a sad, wistful look that is both haunting and captivating to the viewer. Any wealthy sage or wizard would pay 5,000 gp or more for this rare stone.

Tucked between the tomes are two folded scrolls, each cast at 7th-level of ability:

Clerical scroll: *command, cure light wounds, invisibility to undead; find traps, messenger; cure disease, dispel magic, remove curse.*

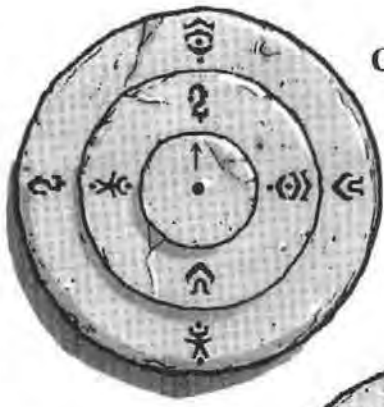
Magical scroll: *affect normal fires, chill touch, grease, hold portal; blur, detect invisibility, glitterdust.*

The table is enchanted to repel all dust but is otherwise non-magical. Sitting on the table is a false spell book. This leather-bound tome is obviously old. Its leather casing is cracked, and the bronze corner protectors are green with verdigris. This book is filled with rune-like writing, but more importantly, the first page bears an *explosive runes* spell. Anyone attempting to decipher the first page without first casting *dispel magic* suffers 6d4+4 hp damage and destroys the book in the process.

The tin coffer on the desk holds worthless stones and is treated with a *fire trap* spell cast at 9th-level (1d4+9 hp damage). The box below the desk holds four red candles. The candles are magical and burn continually for 24 hours when lit, even if dropped or immersed in water. A *dispel magic* robs a candle of all magic,

Player Diagram
The Stone Disk

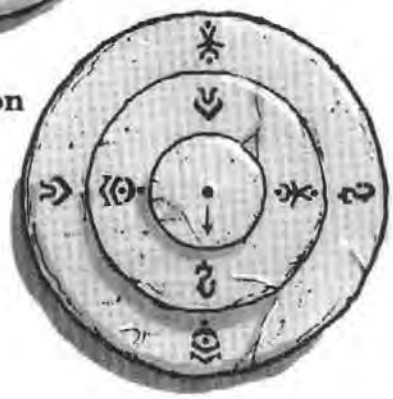
Graphic 4



Correct position to open north door

Graphic 5

Correct position to open south door



Dalmanu -

You are instructed to cease current surveillance of Hills Edge. Gather all avaliable Zhentilar soldiers and proceed immediately to the east edge of the Dusk Wood, directly north of the Leaning Stone. There you will search for an ancient path composed of five stone tiles. Travel in secrecy and kill anyone encountered en route.

Signial me when you arrive at the pathway. Touch the sigils in order: Spider, Arrowhead, Eye, Snake, and the path will teleport your group underground. Investagate the area fully before attempting to return to the surface. Report your findings to me directly; the lost Art you reclaim is of great importance in our struggle against the Harpers and the Great Enemy.

Success or failure will be rewarded in kind. Agents will be sent to assist in two days time.

Graphic 1

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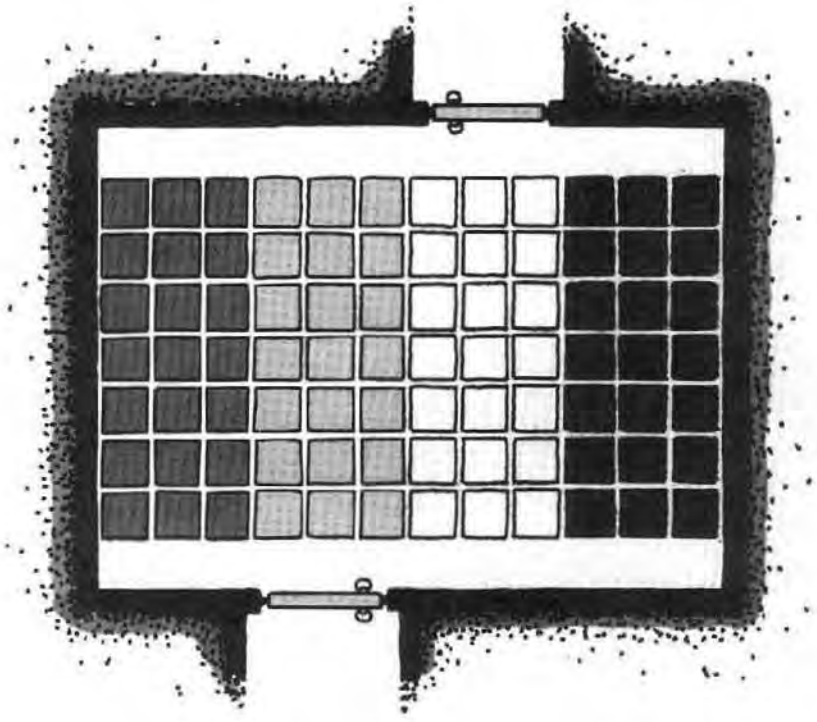
Room Detail Area W6

Red Tile

Green Tile

White Tile

Black Tile



Graphic 3 "Horns of Evil"

Ranger Marking

Graphic 6 Wizard Sigil of Orokoth

Graphic 2 The Path (DM)

Quadras
(apprentice)
"Eye"

Negala
(apprentice)
"Snake"

Sustren
(apprentice)
"Arrowhead

Uhalos
(apprentice)
"Spider"

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A studious mage is surprised by Orokoth's helmed horror.

changing it into a normal candle in all respects.

The sheet of parchment laying directly under the paperweight is actually a palimpsest—a carnivorous creature masquerading as a simple sheet of paper covered with runes. The palimpsest remains motionless until it or the paperweight is touched, at which time it attempts to draw a victim into its body and feed. If the initial surprise attack fails, the creature contents itself with inflicting deep paper cuts and absorbing the blood discharged.

The comfortable chair near the desk is actually a killer mimic held by a special version of the *temporal stasis* spell. One round after being touched, the mimic will revert to its natural state. The mimic, confused and angry, immediately attacks anything nearby.

The suit of armor is actually a helmed horror. The horror stands motionless unless it is handled roughly or one of the library's books is opened, at which time it animates and attacks. A modified *silence* spell enables the horror to move without making a sound, imposing a –4 penalty to its victim's surprise roll if the individual is looking in the wrong direction. Leaning against the wall behind the horror is a non-magical battle axe made of blacked metal; it utilizes this weapon in combat. The horror will not pursue characters outside this room.

Helmed horror: INT high; AL N; AC 2; MV 12, fly 12 (E); HD 4+19; hp 46; THAC0 12; Dmg 1–8 (battle axe) or 1–4 (fist); SD impervious to fire and edged weapons; immune to all mind-affecting attacks; MR 20%; SZ M; ML 20; XP 2,000; *Monstrous Compendium Annual, Volume One*.

Note that the automaton is Netherese. It is identical to "typical" helmed horrors except as follows: it is not immune to three specific spells, as are most helmed horrors, but instead it has 20% magic resistance.

Killer mimic: INT semi-; AL NE; AC 7; MV 3; HD 9; hp 52; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3–12; SA glue; SD camouflage; SZ L; ML 13; XP 2,000; *MM*/250.

Palimpsest: INT semi-; AL N; AC 10; MV 3; HD 3; hp 16; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–3; SA swallow; SD immune to fire and edged weapons; MR 10%; SZ S; ML 5; XP 650; *Monstrous Compendium Annual, Volume Two*/93.

W8. Wheel of Fortune. This square chamber is empty save for two features: a huge stone disk (shown in **Graphics #4** and **#5**) and a motionless body clad in robes.

The body is that of Trista Kueroul, a female Zhentarim agent, originally of Zhentil Keep. She was a 4th-level wizard of chaotic evil alignment—one of the two wizards in the last Zhentarim party to enter these ruins. She is clad in dark purple robes and lies face-down. On the body are a few belt pouches containing mundane spell components and four tiny opals worth 80 gp each. Strapped to her thigh, under her robes, is a carved stick of wood. This is a *wand of frost* with one charge left. If the body is carefully examined, spots of a black, oily substance are found on her face and neck.

The 10' diameter stone disk is actually composed of three moving parts: two movable concentric rings surrounding a movable central circle. The central circle is pierced in the center with a deep hole, and an engraved arrow points away from the center hole. The two outer rings bear four engraved symbols identical to the sigils seen on the path outside. (Show the players **Graphic #4**.)

Note that the door opposite the party's entrance cannot be opened by physical means and reflects all magic back 100% at the source. The stone wheel is the only way to open either door from inside this room once shut.

The two movable stone rings can easily be turned by anyone with a Strength of 8 or more. They "click" into position whenever any of the sigils are lined up. If the sigils are lined up in order identical to the path outside (as the stones lie on the ground, not the order they are touched to activate teleportation), and the central arrow is turned to

face a door, that door will silently swing open. (See **Graphic #5.**)

If the sigils are not properly aligned and the central stone circle is moved, a deadly trap activates. On the first incorrect activation, poison (class M) will spray in a cone pattern from the central hole, poisoning the person(s) moving the stone unless a full helm or similar protection is worn. A second incorrect activation will spray poison and release two 10' × 10' × 4' stone blocks from the ceiling that drop at positions '**a**' on the map. A third activation will spray poison and drop blocks onto positions '**b**' on the map. Falling blocks inflict 4d6 damage to anyone standing in that 10' square area of floor. Two successful Dexterity checks indicate a swift dodge from the path of the falling block. One successful check means the character suffered a glancing blow for 1d6 hp damage. Characters struck for more than 15 hp damage must make item saving throws vs. crushing blow, as deemed by the DM.

Further incorrect activations cause the disk to spray poison as before until the poison supply is exhausted. There is enough poison in the trap for 2d12 activations before this happens.

O9. Room of the Fountain. This room is circular, with a diameter of approximately 40 feet. The central feature of this room is a large circular fountain constructed of white marble. Water does not flow from the fountain, but the bowl is nearly full of water and the entire area around the fountain is muddy.

To the northwest, northeast, southwest, and southeast are small corner shelves carved out of the rock walls. In each shelf sits a small dusty vial.

The contents of two vials have long since evaporated, but the vial in the northeast corner still contains powder that was once an *elixir of health*. Likewise, the northwest vial contains the powdery remnants of a potion of *speed*. If wine or alcohol is added to either powder, the potion is restored. Adding water to a powder only has a 25% chance to restore the former potion; otherwise the potion acts as a potion of *delusion* of the actual type (*speed* or *health elixir*)!

If the party enters the muddy area, ten mudmen animate and attack. These creatures were created by seepage from the once magical water to the ground around the fountain. Water has evaporated in the dirt here for centuries, collecting the dweomer and creating the mudmen.

Characters investigating the fountain will spot six gold pieces and a gleaming dagger under the water. This is a dagger treated with a minor magical dweomer, but it is otherwise non-magical. Lurking within the fountain is a water weird that attacks anyone entering the fountain or extending a limb into the water. The creature lashes out with a watery pseudopod and attempts to drag its victim into the 5' deep pool.

Mudmen (10): INT non-; AL N; AC 10; MV 3; HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA mud-throwing, suffocation; SD poison immunity; SZ S; ML special; XP 175; *MM*/260.

Water weird: INT very; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 15; THAC0 15; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA drowning; SD edged and piercing weapons inflict 1 hp damage each; suffers half or no damage from fire; intense cold acts as slow spell; SZ L; ML 14; XP 270; *MM*/104.

O10. Chamber of Webs.

> This area appears roughly triangular in shape. An exit cannot be clearly seen; dusty webs hang from the walls and ceiling and stretch to the floor. Most of the ceiling is obscured, completely covered in webbing. Small kegs or containers of some sort are scattered across the floor.

This triangular chamber was once the lair of a giant spider, carefully placed here by Orokoth long ago. The spider is dead, its husk hanging lifelessly from the dried webs.

The hand kegs contain lantern oil. They were placed here to teach aspiring mages not to be rash in casting destructive spells, but rather to be

selective and choose the best spell for the situation. The oil is extremely flammable; anyone foolish enough to start a fire here could cause an explosion. If webs are set alight or a fire is started, there is a 20% cumulative chance per round that a keg will burst or explode! If a keg bursts, everyone in the room is showered with flaming oil and suffers 2d6 damage (save vs. rod equals half damage). Exploding kegs do 3d6 hp damage (save for half damage). Once two kegs have ignited, another 1-3 kegs automatically burst or explode each round until all twelve have been destroyed. The location of the kegs are marked on the map; the DM should roll 1d12 to determine which kegs are affected. Characters standing within the square that contains a burning keg, or those in the adjacent 10' squares, are subject to fire damage. The oil is usable as lantern fuel.

The double doors to the east are false and open on solid stone.

O11. Underwater Path. Regardless of the door through which they enter, PCs soon discover that the floor of the room slopes down sharply into water. The water is fairly clear, and the party has no trouble spotting a large, submerged opening leading into darkness.

This underwater maze is constructed of passages 8' high and 10' wide. Water visibility allows one to view the 10' section ahead clearly, provided there is a magical light source. The water is cold and drinkable. In the 10' × 10' square marked **X**, a tiny glyph has been etched on the ceiling. This rune does nothing unless a character swims below it wearing a false *water breathing* ring; see details below.

A unencumbered PC swims 60 feet per round; a moderately encumbered or lightly armored (AC 5 or worse) PC swims 40' per round; severely encumbered or well armored (AC 4 or better) PCs swim 20' per round. A character without magical aid can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to 1/3 his Constitution score, rounded up; thus, a moderately encumbered PC with Constitution 13 can swim 40' per round and hold his breath for 5 rounds. A clever PC can store one extra round's worth of air in a bladder or sealable scroll tube.

Any character who runs out of air thrashes helplessly beneath the water until assistance is rendered, or the PC drowns. See "Holding Your Breath" in the *PHB* for details.

Sitting on the floor a few feet from the water's edge (in the northwest and south entry rooms) is an unlocked, unmarked wooden coffer. Within the coffer lies a gold ring inscribed with wave-like designs. The ring detects as magical and seems to function as a *ring of water breathing*. The ring is actually a deadly trap, placed here to eliminate apprentices looking for an easy way to bypass the underwater path. When a PC wearing either ring swims underwater to the northeastern square in the corner the maze, a *hold person* spell (cast at the 19th-level of ability) affects the person wearing the false magic ring (no save). In addition, the magic of this special rune *dispels* the water breathing power of the ring, rendering it non-magical. The trapped character begins drowning and eventually dies unless rescued.

12. Junction Chamber. This dusty room is 30' square and has six obvious exits: northwest, north, northeast, southwest, south, and southeast. The party first enters through one the southern stone doors. All of the doors bear markings in Thorass, inscribed into the stone at head-height. The northwest and southwest doors read "PATH OF STRENGTH," the north and south doors read "PATH OF WITS," and the northeast and southeast doors read "PATH OF OBSTACLES." These doors operate similar in all respects to the doors in the entry chamber (area **1**) and share their magic-reflecting ability.

As soon as all the PCs emerge from any door, that door swings silently shut behind them. Neither force nor magical means can prevent this from occurring. Once shut, that door cannot be opened by the same party by any means short of a *wish*. Thus, a party entering the room via the south portal cannot use the same door as an exit.

As the party reaches the center of the room, a commanding voice will boom out, "Are you pleased with the path you have chosen, mageling? Perhaps you wish to select another?"

If the party attempts to open a portal previously opened, the voice will announce: "That path is closed to you, mage. Select another." This forces the PCs to traverse at least two of the three paths.

Those conducting a thorough search of the room discover a rune etched in the exact center of the floor, hidden by the dust. This is the wizard sigil of Orokoth and is depicted in **Graphic #6**. Any PC who touches or steps on the rune is healed for 2d4+1 hp instantly. In that instant, the sigil glows bright blue for three segments, returning to normal afterward. The rune can heal any number of people, but it will not heal more than one individual per round. A person touching the rune a second time within 24 hours is shocked for 2d4+3 hp damage, and the rune glows a brilliant emerald shade for 1d6 turns, during which time none of the rune's powers function.

S13. Dead End. At this point, the passage appears to end before a solid stone wall. PCs searching the floor here easily find a shallow, hand-shaped depression partially filled with dust. If a wizard places his hand in the depression, the large slab-like barrier before the character will sink to the floor, allowing the party to enter area **S14**. The "door" can also be lowered using a *knock* spell or *chime of opening*.

The slab rises to seal the passage two rounds after opening. Anyone between it and the ceiling is crushed for 5d10 hp damage. The slab rises slowly, and it is nearly impossible for a mobile PC to be trapped and crushed. This stone portal reflects spells 100% back at their source.

S14. Room of the Skull.

> This triangular chamber has no obvious exits. The walls are rough and appear scorched in areas. Littering the floor are blackened bones and the burnt remains of an ornate staff. A fire-shrunken skull lies near the center of the room. A small, metallic object sits in the ashes next to the skull.

The skull is the remains of one of Orokoth's apprentices. Near the skull lies a silver key. This key fits into a small keyhole embedded in each of the room's two secret exits, located in

the middle of the north and south walls respectively. The keyholes appear as small holes bored into the stone at waist-height.

Characters searching the walls have the same chance to find the keyholes as they would a concealed door. If the key is inserted into a keyhole and turned 180° clockwise, the slab of stone sinks to the floor, allowing egress. After two rounds, the portal rises and seals the exit once again.

The guardian of the key is Nereth, the flameskull—a powerful creation of the long-vanished Orokoth. Nereth was manufactured centuries ago; the sheer boredom of guarding the key has driven him insane. He still retains his intelligence and proves to be a cunning opponent, however.

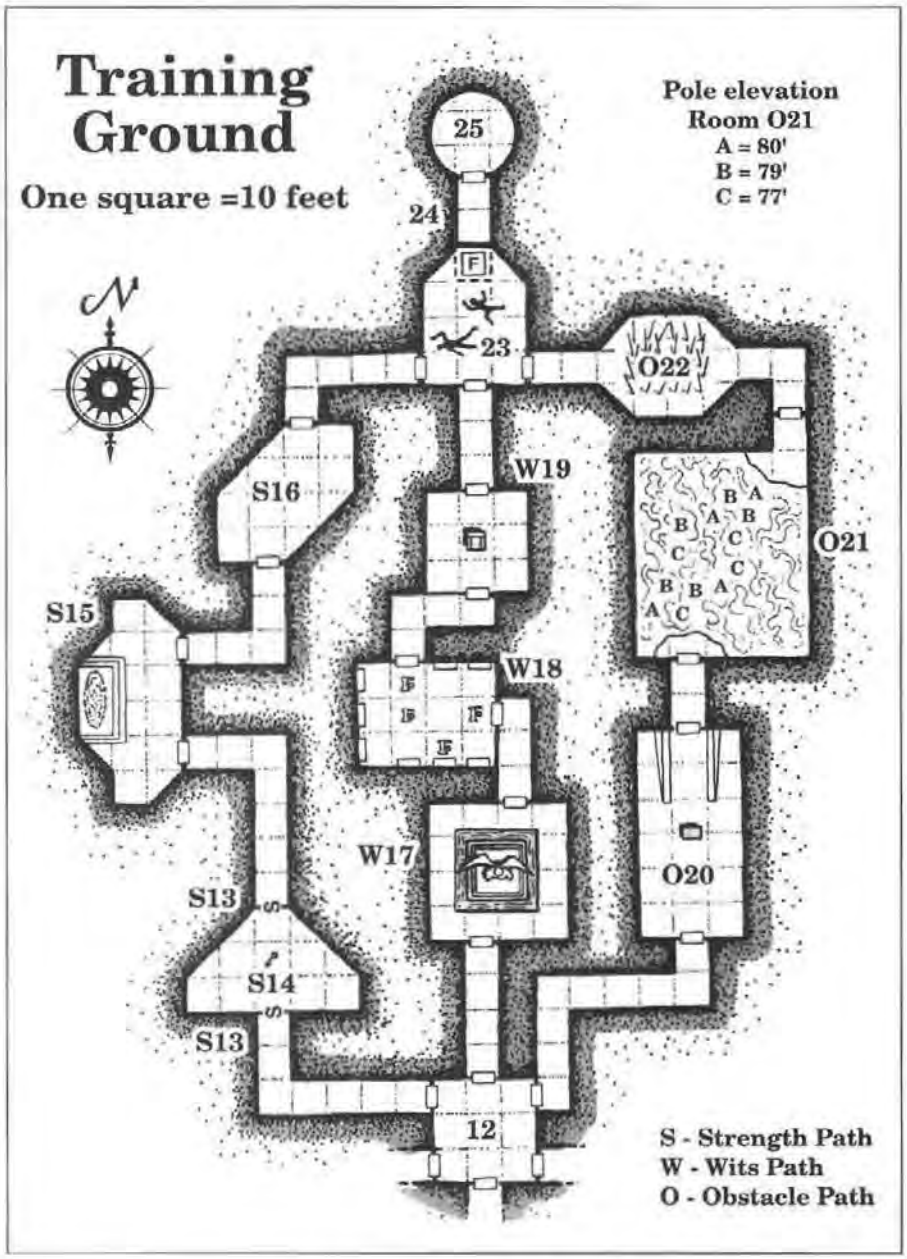
Nereth

Nereth is extremely lonely and bored. Orokoth's hold on him has faded, but Nereth's mind has become unstable from the years of solitude. He levitates into the air, attacks once with his *magic missiles,* and then hangs back, avoiding conflict if possible. After his initial attack, he does not strike unless struck first, and then he returns fire only against the person attacking him.

If approached peaceably, he offers to join the party and act as advisor in return for the party's company. If allowed to join the PCs, he hovers about, asking questions about the adventurers, the current state of affairs in the Realms, and anything else it deems pertinent. He is moody, restless and unrelentingly inquisitive. He knows little about the training ground except for areas **S14–S16**. He is not aware of the malfunctioning gate in area **S15**. He possesses the equivalent of 16 Intelligence and has the Spellcraft proficiency. There is a base 20% chance (non-cumulative) that he remains idle if the party is attacked and a 10% chance that he actually joins the opposing side if the party's antagonist is intelligent and seems more "interesting." Otherwise he darts about, offering battle advice to his new-found friends and firing a *magic missile* at anyone seeking to harm them.

Nereth flies into a rage and attacks until destroyed if mistreated or slighted. He forgives polite heroes for attacks made against him in the initial fray, but afterward he is not so charitable.

Flameskull: INT genius; AL LN; AC 3; MV Fl 20 (A); HD 4+4; hp 28; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg special; SA *magic missile,* waves of weariness, *dispel magic;* SD regenerates 1 hp/round; spell reflection; immune to mind-affecting attacks, cold, fire, electricity, poison, paralysis and death magic; turned as lich; MR 88%; SZ S; ML 16; XP 2,000; *MC Annual, Volume One* (variant).



S15. The Brilliant Portal.

This oddly-shaped chamber is empty of furniture. Dominating the end of the area is a raised stone dais, several steps up from the main floor. Suspended over the platform, seemingly in mid-air, is a shimmering oval of flashing blue-white light. The oval nearly touches the 15' high ceiling overhead.

Every few seconds, the oval unleashes a blinding light. Sparks jump from the oval, blackening the

floor. Lying on the scarred floor in front of the glowing oval is a skeletal form—the remains of a large, tentacled monster. As you watch, a particularly long spark jumps and strikes the floor with a loud cracking sound.

The remains are those of a large displacer beast. The death of a guardian creature here originally caused a replacement creature to be pulled through the oval *gate* via contingency magics. The magic powering the *gate* eventually malfunctioned, and when this particular displacer beast was drawn to the *gate*, it only emerged halfway on this side before the gate fluctuated, cutting it in two.

This malfunctioning *gate* is extremely dangerous. Any character attempting to enter the sparking portal must make a saving throw vs. spells or be disintegrated. Likewise any limb, member, or object thrust into the *gate* is disintegrated if a save if failed. Characters must make a save each and every time such a feat is attempted, as the magical power of the *gate* fluctuates. If the flameskull Nereth is with the party, he will not enter the *gate* and insists that the portal is malfunctioning.

If a character fully enters the portal and is not disintegrated, that character emerges from a similar *gate* deep in the Stonelands. Any character transported through the oval may easily return to the training ground, if desired. (Another saving throw is necessary to avoid disintegration.) Travel from this monster-infested area in the heart of the Stonelands back to civilization could be developed as a side adventure by the DM. Lying on the ground near the Stonelands *gate* is the rear half of the skeletal displacer beast.

The *gate* is the only way PCs may exit Orokoth's training ground without possessing the special black sapphire in area **23**. A *dispel magic* collapses the *gate* if successfully cast against 19th-level magic. A *wand of negation, rod of cancellation* or *anti-magic shell* destroys the oval gate instantly.

S16. Chamber of Opposition. This room is shaped like a giant hexagon. Mounted on the inside of each entry door are huge mirrors, 3' wide × 7' high. These mirrors reflect most magic 100% back at the source. A *shatter* spell will destroy a mirror, as will a *limited wish* or *disintegrate* spell. Physical force cannot harm or move a mirror.

Regardless of which entry route is taken by the party (north or south), the mirror across the room from the party acts as a *mirror of opposition*, whereas the mirror mounted on the door through which the party enters will seem non-magical except for its apparent invulnerability.

When a PC gets within 20 feet of the designated *mirror of opposition*, a duplicate of that PC appears and attacks. Duplicates only attack the individuals they resemble. Note that party familiars and pets are also duplicated. If the flameskull Nereth has joined the party, he is duplicated as well!

In the event of Nereth's duplication, the flameskull cackles with glee at the situation and attacks his clone with fury. The two flameskulls hover and dive about, launching *magic missiles* and blasts of flame while hurling vile curses at one another. The flameskull combat ends 2d6 melee rounds later with one or the other destroyed. Remember to check for Nereth's possible battle actions (see area **S14**). The DM should roll 1d6 and consult the table below for the result of the flameskull combat:

1. Nereth is destroyed and explodes in flames near a random party member, inflicting 1d6 damage to that luckless individual. His duplicate disappears.

2. Nereth is destroyed, and his duplicate chuckles gleefully before disappearing.

3–5. Nereth destroys his duplicate and laughs madly.

6. Nereth easily dispatches his foe. The duplicate flameskull is hurled down from the air, streaming fire and exploding against a mirror.

Strewn about the room are the skeletal remains of previous apprentices who ventured into the training ground long ago. If the party spends a full turn searching the area, the following items are found: a potion of *healing* (three doses) in a silver flask, two pale green tourmalines (100 gp each), 14 Netherese silver pieces (20 gp each to a sage or antiquarian), three usable daggers, and a leather belt pouch. One of the daggers is magical but will not reveal any dweomer when *detect magic* is cast. The wielder of the dagger may cast *feather fall* twice/day merely by gripping the pommel and concentrating on the result. An *identify* spell reveals this information about the dagger, as will experimentation. Merely holding the dagger or using it in combat will not reveal this power.

W17. Dracolisk Statue.

This room is constructed of rough grey stone. In the center of the room is a raised stone platform three steps higher than the main floor. Sitting in the center of the elevated area is a huge, hideous statue of a multi-armed, scaled beast with tooth-filled jaws and furled wings. Surrounding this raised center square is a moat—a narrow depression filled with a clear, bubbling liquid. Thin wisps of smoke rise from the moat.

Important: Two rounds after the first party member enters this room, the entry door begins to swing shut; physical force cannot prevent the door from closing, but a *hold portal* spell will keep the door open one additional round. Once closed, the entry and exit doors cannot be opened except as detailed below.

The bubbling liquid is acid. Immersing bare flesh in the acid inflicts 1d6 hp damage. The moat is only 2' wide and can easily be jumped. Small-sized PCs such as halflings, dwarves, and gnomes must make a successful Dexterity check to leap over the moat.

The statue is carved from obsidian and represents a dracolisk, although characters may not immediately identify the creature. The statue appears to be growling, with claws outstretched as if to pounce. Engraved on the floor in front of the statue is a single word—"SACRIFICE"—written in Thorass.

Examination of the statue's mouth reveals a deep cavity containing gold and silver shavings and bits of wood. These are the remains of magic items. If a magic item is placed in the statue's mouth, the eyes of the statue sparkle. Moments later, the jaws close and grind the item to ruin, after

which the north and south doors of the room open. Inserting any magic item triggers this process, even a small coin treated with a *light* spell. The item must be permanently enspelled; simply casting a limited-duration spell on a object will not work. Even large items, such as swords, may be placed point-first into the dracolisk's mouth, as the cavity has a 4' depth.

If a PC places a gem, coin, or other non-magical valuable into the jaws, the statue will partially animate, spitting out the item and growling before returning to an inactive state. If a character places a non-magical item of no worth (rock, candle, etc.) into the jaws, the statue spits out the item as above, but the dracolisk eyes glow green and the person before the statue must save vs. petrification or be turned to stone. Note that this is a magical effect, and the direction the dracolisk faces has no bearing on the result.

The statue is mounted on a rotating disk, and it automatically turns to face the door through which the characters enter. The statue requires 200 hp damage to destroy and has AC 2; destroying the statue effectively traps the party in this room. Neither magic nor force have any effect on the doors to this chamber; they can be opened only via the statue.

W18. Chamber of Mists. A thick silver mist shot with ochre streamers hides the details of this room. PCs can just barely perceive the many doors along each wall.

The mist is corrosive, inflicting 1d4 hp damage to bare flesh each round. In addition, the mist pits armor, permanently reducing its effectiveness by 1 AC point every round until the armor collapses in a useless heap (i.e., once reduced to AC 10). The mist also corrodes small metal items within 1d4+1 rounds. Materials made of cloth and wood are unaffected, but metal shields, weapons, and other metallic objects must save vs. acid or be destroyed. Items that make a successful save must re-roll every five rounds until the PCs leave or the mist is dispelled.

A *dispel magic* clears the room of mist for 1d8+1 rounds. A *gust of wind* drives the acidic cloud upward to the ceiling for the duration of that spell. A *hold vapor* spell is also effective.

The mist actually conceals the primary threat here. Carved into certain 10' × 10' floor sections are sigils—see **Graphic #6**. Those sections of floor not bearing the sigil of Orokoth are trapped. Individuals stepping or placing 80 lbs. weight or more on an unmarked square trigger hidden trap devices in the southwest and northwest ceiling corners. Two brass javelins fire at the activation square, striking as 6 HD creatures (THAC0 15) for 1d6+1 hp damage each. Characters following the sigil "path" can avoid the trapped squares, but if the mist is present, the PCs must crawl on the floor to see the carven glyphs.

There is a yet another threat here. When the last of the unfortunate Zhentarim party members passed this way, a single bonebat accompanying them was accidentally left behind in the room. This undead creature takes no damage from the mist as it swoops down from the ceiling and attacks any non-Zhentarim passing below. If a character is struck by the diving bonebat, that character must make an immediate Dexterity check at +2 or fall/step onto an adjacent floor square (and possibly trigger the spear traps).

The DM should play up the confusion of this room for all it is worth, with the choking gas, firing javelins and dive-bombing bonebat. Things will go better for a party that clears the room of obvious threats (mist, bonebat) before proceeding.

Bonebat: INT low; AL NE; AC 7; MV 3, Fl 18 (C); HD 4; hp 17; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SA paralyzation; SD see sidebar on page 33; SZ S; ML 20; XP 975; *Monstrous Compendium Annual, Volume Three*/11.

W19. The Zombie-Wizard.

This small, rectangular room is decorated in draping cobwebs and layers of dust. Tapestries depicting griffons, dragons, sphinxes, and other fantastic flying creatures cover the walls. A few pieces of furniture are scattered about—a padded chair, a round table, a small couch, a weathered trunk. These furnishings were once rich but have lost their value with age. Two brass braziers give off a feeble red glow,

New Magic Item

Bag of Bones

This magic item allows its possessor to create a small company of skeletons willing to fight on behalf of the bag owner. To activate the bag, the owner places small bones from skeletal remains into the bag. Later, in combat, the possessor of the bag need merely upend the bag while saying the command word, and a skeleton will appear for each bone therein. Each bone must be from a different skeleton; extra bones from the same body will not create extra skeletons. Thus, five bones taken from five separate skeletal bodies can create five animated skeletons.

The bag of bones can create up to 24 HD of skeletons per day.

Bones taken from previously animated remains or raised dead will not function in a *bag of bones*. Likewise, bones taken from "fresh kills" are useless; the bones must be at least one year old. Furthermore, the bones must be taken from human, humanoid or normal animal remains. The skeletons created (one per bone) are identical to skeletons as described in the *Monstrous Manual*™ (page 315); human bones create human skeletons, humanoid bones create monster skeletons, and animal bones create appropriate animal skeletons. Human(oid) skeletons will appear wielding an appropriate weapon, usually a sword of some kind. The skeletons will battle all enemies of the bag holder until the battle is finished, at which time the skeletons crumble to dust.

Though commonly used by those of evil mien, these bags are actually neutral magic and are not evil. A *bag of bones* resembles a normal cloth bag of no great worth tied with a silver cord. Bag materials vary; silk, burlap, wicker and other unusual materials have been used to create bags of this type.

XP Value: 1,000 **GP Value:** 2,500

and a faint smell of incense hangs in the air.

Your attention is riveted to the room's occupant—a skeletal being clad in robes floats ten feet above the floor, sitting in a huge, ornate, high-backed chair. The left hand of the figure is casually draped across a short rod of some sort. The chair swivels and the figure regards you for a moment, points of red glittering in its eye sockets. A dry, commanding voice says, "Why do you disturb my rest?"

PCs with some knowledge of the training ground might think the skeletal figure is Orokoth, now a lich or other powerful undead being. This is not the case. The figure is actually a specially prepared skeleton treated with various spells. Orokoth placed this skeleton here to waste the spells of his more gullible mage students.

The chair is held in the air by a special *permanent levitate* spell and turns via an *unseen servant*. The chair can swivel in any direction to face intruders, and it continues to do so even if the skeleton is destroyed. The skeleton itself has been treated with a *permanent unseen servant* (to provide jaw and hand motions) and a unique version of the *improved skull watch* spell (see *Forgotten Realms Adventures* sourcebook) that allows "Orokoth" to cast a single *magic missile* spell (as a 9th-level caster) at hostile intruders. The red eyes are the work of a simple *cantrip* spell cast on the skull.

The skeleton can convincingly move its jaw as well as the finger bones and forearm of its right arm, mimicking speaking and spellcasting gestures. The metal rod is worthless, but it might appear valuable or magical from a distance. The figure is clad in a rotted, black wizard's robe.

If the party ignores the skeletal figure, it waits a round before repeating its question. If the party responds vocally in any way, the voice will reply, "A foolish thought indeed. Retreat while you still can." If the party attacks the figure, it responds by making false gestures and casting the *magic missile* spell, at the same time saying, "Fools! You were warned!" The vocalizations are all created by *magic mouth* spells cast inside the skull cavity; thus a visible mouth does not appear to the party. The skeleton has AC 7 and can withstand 8 hp damage.

A clever party might deduce the false nature of the "undead wizard" simply by the manner in which it speaks. It is recommended that characters gain no experience for destroying the figure in ignorance of its true nature.

The trunk holds ancient, rotted bolts of cloth. The powdered incense in each brazier is magical; it will burn indefinitely and can be extinguished and re-lit at any time. City temples would pay 100 gp or more for the incense.

O20. Room of the Roller.

On the floor of the room before you lies a skeleton, its bones old and yellowed, clad in rotting purple robes. The skeleton's head lies a short distance from the rest of the body.

In the center of the room lies a tiny wooden coffer. Swinging above the coffer are two pendulums, their silver blades polished and gleaming. The pendulums swing down in deadly arcs, passing above the coffer and narrowly missing each other. The pendulums appear to be attached to the ceiling about one foot apart.

At the north end of the room is a wooden door with iron hinges. To either side of the door is a stone incline, approximately one foot wide. These ramps slope from floor to ceiling at a 30-degree angle of elevation.

The pendulums swing together at regular intervals. A *dispel magic* causes both pendulums to slow and then remain motionless for 1d6 rounds before gradually returning to full speed. PCs attempting to dodge the swinging blades must make a successful Dexterity check or suffer 4d6 hp damage. PCs who crawl across the floor can bypass the blades to reach either the coffer or the north section of the room. The skeleton in tattered robes is the remains of an apprentice slain by the blades.

The carved mahogany coffer is locked by means of a simple catch. Inside the coffer is a *ring of warmth*. If the coffer is opened on the floor, nothing adverse happens. If the coffer is lifted, however, a strong wire attached to the bottom of the coffer triggers the second trap in this area. Pulling the coffer upwards causes a secret ceiling panel above the north door to open, releasing a huge stone cylinder. The heavy cylinder then rolls down the ramps to crush those in its path. The huge roller has a movement rate of 15. The cylinder is 8' in diameter and approximately 14' long. Dodging the cylinder requires a successful Dexterity check with a –2 penalty for those whose movement rates are slower than 12. This includes PCs encumbered by armor and equipment.

Those crushed beneath the cylinder sustain 6d6 hp damage, and their possessions must save vs. crushing blow or be destroyed. PCs making a successful saving throw vs. petrification receive a glancing blow for 3d6 damage and need not roll saves for their possessions.

Unless destroyed or halted, the roller eventually slams into the southern door with a ground-shaking crash, effectively blocking the door. A combined Strength score of 40 is required to roll the cylinder away from the door. Unlike most stonework in the training ground, the roller can be destroyed by *rock to mud, disintegrate*, and similar spells.

O21. The Long Pillars.

The floor of this rectangular room drops away, revealing a pit of indeterminate depth filled with pale white mist. Standing between you and the far ledge are several wooden poles, each as wide as a tree's trunk.

The poles are flat-topped and about one foot in diameter. They are arranged in a staggered pattern across the misty expanse, reaching slightly different heights as well. The last pole nearly touches the far ledge. Clearly, someone expects you to cross the room by leaping from pole to pole—a risky feat at best.

The floor here lies 80' below. PCs must jump from pole to pole or find some other means to cross the room. Characters electing to jump from pole to pole must make a successful Dexterity check for each jump. The

poles are of varying heights, as indicated on the map. If a PC attempts to leap from one pole to another with a height difference of more than 2 feet (higher or lower), the Dexterity check is made at a –2 penalty. Do not tell the players about this penalty until a character attempts such a jump.

A failed Dexterity check necessitates an immediate second Dexterity check—if this second check fails, the character will plummet to the floor below. If the second check is successful, the character has slipped but is hanging from the top of the pole. Hanging PCs must make a successful Strength check to pull themselves up to a standing position; otherwise they are helpless and must wait for help. Each round of waiting forces the PC to make a new Strength check to see if he can hold on; a failed roll, and the dangling PC falls.

There are many pillars, but only seven jumps are required to cross the obstacle if the characters are selective. Characters may use a *fly* spell or similar magic to cross the chasm.

Whenever a character steps onto a new pole, roll 1d8. If the result is a '1', a powerful *gust of wind* blows up from the depths. Characters perched on poles must save vs. spell at +2 or lose their balance, risking a fall and rolling the secondary Dexterity check as detailed above. This magically summoned wind has no significant effect on characters roped together or flying. The wind is created by a spell cast long ago by Orokoth, and a *dispel magic* cast in the room stops the unnatural wind for 1d6 turns.

Falling PCs suffer 2d6 hp damage, landing on a soft carpet of brown mold. The mold immediately begins to absorb body heat from anyone landing upon it, draining 4d8 hp per round. A *ring of warmth* (like the one found in area **O20**) protects against the heat-drain.

PCs searching below find a scattering of ancient, brittle bones, as well as a human corpse. This was an unlucky member of the first Zhentarim search team—a 3rd-level chaotic evil fighter named Menem Tralla. The body is clad in dark garments and studded leather armor. Also on the body is a pouch containing 21 gp, 6 sp, and a star-shaped charm carved from wood. A few feet away lies a non-magical long sword with an ornate hilt.

A blazing skeleton guards the innermost chambers of the dungeon.

Brown mold: INT non-; AL N; AC 9; MV 0; HD n/a; THAC0 n/a; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA freezing; SD absorb heat; SZ L; ML 14; XP 15; *MM*/255.

O22. Many Spears. This chamber contains a trap, sprung long ago and never reset. Several rows of iron spears jut upwards from the floor. The spears are eight feet long and rusted in place.

Hanging from one spear is the a yellowed skeleton clad in mouldering green tatters. Close examination of the body may prove difficult as it lies near the center of the dense forest of spear shafts. A spear thrusts through the ribcage of the skeleton, and the

jaws of the skull are open as if engaged in an endless, silent scream. Clutched in one skeletal hand is a gnarled wooden staff. This staff is non-magical.

Characters staying to the sides of this room can easily circumvent the spears and exit this area.

23. Blazing Bones.

> This chamber appears to have been the site of a recent combat. Two blackened bodies lie just north of your entry point. You have little time to examine anything further, for your attention is drawn to a skeletal figure that has turned to face you! The skull and shoulders of the figure burn with an orange, smokeless flame, and small fires dance along its bony arms. Clutched in the skeleton's fist is a short scepter or rod. The skeleton almost seems to grin at you as it approaches...

The skeleton is actually a blazing bones. This horrid undead creature was created when the leader of the first Zhentarim party, a 5th-level wizard named Thorak Srasam, set off a *fire trapped* chest placed here long ago by Orokoth. The magical fire interacted badly with contingency magics placed upon Thorak's person by Sememmon, changing Thorak into a blazing bones.

Thorak is in agony and his mind is becoming unhinged by the unending pain. He destroyed the surviving members of the Zhentarim party and attacks anyone he sees.

Thorak is doubly-dangerous because of the scepter he carries. The scepter appears to be a short, thick brass rod with a dragon head at each end. One end of the sceptre fires a 60' beam that paralyzes its target for 3d4+4 rounds (save vs. rod negates paralysis). The other end of the sceptre fires a similar beam that inflicts 2d6+2 hp damage to its target (none if save is successful). Each use drains one charge, and only one ability can be used each round. Thorak found this dangerous souvenir during an earlier expedition and does not hesitate to use it against intruders when not employing a fiery attack. The scepter has 28 charges.

If Nereth accompanies the PCs to this chamber, he attempts a flame attack on the blazing bones once combat begins. When his fiery attack has no effect on the skeleton, Nereth draws back from the melee to shout words of encouragement to the characters. Nereth dislikes other undead, and he will not join Thorak under any circumstances. Thorak ignores the flameskull until most of the adventurers are incapacitated or slain, after which he attempts to destroy Nereth using his sceptre.

If reduced to 6 hp or fewer, the blazing bones explodes into a firestorm. Thorak is destroyed, and everyone else inside the room suffers 6d6 hp damage (save vs. spell for half damage).

If he survives the encounter, Thorak eventually begins to explore more of the ruins, insane or not. His original party separated at area **2**, half taking the Path of Wits and half taking the Path of Obstacles. Thorak and his two companions were the only ones to make it this far.

The two bodies are the remains of two 2nd-level chaotic evil Zhentarim fighters, Orto and Pelthan. The bodies were repeatedly burned by Thorak, even after death, and little remains of their equipment or armor.

There are a few burned wall hangings here, as well a scorched chair and a broken table. Near the northern, narrowed end of the chamber is a huge, blackened chest. This was the chest that Orokoth *fire trapped*. The chest is worthless and ruined, but if moved, a secret floor hatch will be discovered. This panel lifts by means of a inset pull ring, and beneath is a narrow tunnel that drops 10 feet into an unlit corridor (area **24**).

Blazing bones: INT genius; AL CE; AC 5; MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 42; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4+2 (×2); SA fire hurling (20' range), firestorm (6d6 hp fireball), scepter; SD immune to heat and fire; undead immunities; SZ M; ML 20; XP 1,500; *Monstrous Compendium Annual, Volume One*.

24. Sunken Hallway. The walls of this 20' long corridor are adorned with ornate carvings of mages engaged in all manner of activities, including spellcasting. Orcs, ogres, wyverns, gargoyles, and other creatures (some unidentifiable) cower before the magical might of the wizards pictured on these walls. There are also scenes of wizards advising cringing kings, slaying quailing soldiers, and other such scenarios. They are harmless bas-reliefs, but magical detection reveals some neutral magic here—a lingering Netherese magical aura (treat as *Nystul's magic aura*).

Written on a great stone door leading to area **25** is a single word in Thorass: "Rewakd." Inset into the door below the inscription is a small red tile. The door has no pull-ring or handle. The door cannot be opened by physical or magical means except as follows.

If any magic item is touched to the red tile, the door silently opens. Touching a non-Netherese magic item to the tile also opens the door, but if the item is charged, it is immediately drained of 1d8 charges. Uttering the name "Orokoth" aloud also opens the door, but it is doubtful the players will discover this means of entrance without employing a *legend lore* spell.

If the party remains in this corridor for more than three rounds and does not open the door, a fanged *magic mouth* appears on the ceiling and states in a deep voice: "Your quest is nearly done, mageling. Merely knock with an item of magic to enter." The message repeats every three rounds until the north door is opened or all characters leave the lower corridor.

25. Circular Niche. Behind the door is a circular room with a 6' high ceiling. Sitting atop a raised dais is a purple velvet cushion and a long coffer of sablewood. The coffer is worth 500 gp, double that to a collector of Netherese antiquities. Floating above the coffer is a line of six flying daggers, all pointing downward. These daggers ignore any wizard or specialist mage who opens the unlocked coffer, but they immediately attack any other character who dares touch the coffer.

Inside the coffer is a *ring of wizardry* (doubles 2nd- and 3rd-level spells) and a magical black sapphire. This sapphire is worth 5,000 gp. More importantly, it allows the holder and his companions to exit Orokoth's Training Ground. See area **1** for further details. The gem and the ring are inset in an ornamental fashion on

purple silk padding inside the coffer.

As the sapphire is touched, a small *magic mouth* appears on the inside lid of the coffer, saying: "Well done, brave mage. Now let us see if you survive the path back to where you began." The voice then trails off and the *mouth* disappears in a sparkle of blue light.

Flying daggers (6): INT non-; AL N; AC 5; MV Fl 21 (A); HD 1+1; hp 9 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1–4/1–4; SA strikes creatures only harmed by +2 or better weapons; SD immune to mind-affecting attacks; SZ T; ML 20; XP 120.

Concluding the Adventure

When the party emerges from the training ground, they could meet Nyth and company, depending on the time schedule (see sidebar on page 33). If the party defeats Nyth and his Zhentarim companions, there is a 60% chance Sememmon is scrying the area and learns what has happened. If this occurs, Sememmon dispatches a group to eliminate the party. This group consists of 8–12 2nd-level Zhentish soldiers, accompanied by two wizards of 4th or 5th level and led by a 7th-level priest of Cyric perched on a foulwing (detailed in the *Monstrous Compendium Annual*, Volume One) or some other evil flying steed. Rogart the ranger, if somehow contacted, surely helps good characters in such a situation. If the adventurers defeat the Zhentarim party, nothing further is attempted in the near future, but Sememmon informs his superiors of the situation.

If the PCs leave the ruins or defeats Nyth's party without being detected by Sememmon, the Zhentarim do not discover what has occurred for at least a week. Eventually, Sememmon begins an investigation based in Hill's Edge to unravel the truth.

Experience Points

The Training Ground of Orokoth is dangerous; surviving characters should gain some extra experience for their efforts. Below are guidelines for awarding experience on a group or individual basis as is appropriate:

Party befriends Almon or Rogart the ranger: 1,000 XP for either.

Character reaches the Circular Niche (area **25**): 1,000 XP.

Party does not disturb the dormant bleeder (area **5**): 1,000 XP.

Party befriends Nereth the flameskull (area **14**): 1,500 XP.

Character recognizes "Orokoth" as false (area **19**): 150 XP.

Party escapes Training Ground using Black Sapphire: 10,000 XP.

Further Adventures

An interested party can find many new adventures in the area. The Zhentarim, fractured since the fall of Zhentil Keep, desire control of Hill's Edge but have had mixed success so far. New plots are always afoot, and Sememmon makes an excellent recurring villain who might someday face the PCs directly.

The ranger Rogart might decide, having learned of the party's recent success against the Zhentarim, to offer them positions as spies for the crown (of Cormyr). He looks for ways to test the characters before making such an offer, however. He otherwise might offer them single missions against local Zhentarim agents or the evil temple factions in Hill's Edge. Ω

Our thanks to this issue's playtesters!

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Joanna Cochran
Dustin Gebhardt
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Jeffrey "No-fur" Stanley
Carly Levin

SIDE TREKS

BY MATTHEW G. ADKINS

Artwork by David Day

"The Little People" is an AD&D® SideTrek adventure intended for a party of 3–5 1st or 2nd level PCs (about six total levels). The party should be primarily good in nature, especially lawful good, since the rescue of Doliver is a mostly charitable act. The party can consist of any mix of classes, although wizards and priests will find their spellcasting abilities severely inhibited. The adventure takes place in any temperate woodland on the DM's world.

For the DM

This story revolves around the exploits of one Doliver Treemoss, a leprechaun of clan Treemoss. Doliver is a happy-go-lucky fellow with little foresight and even less caution. While romping through the woods with his brother, Cecil, he spied a small camp set by a pair of brigands. Wandering in for a closer view, Doliver was shocked as his *invisibility* suddenly expired, leaving him in full view of the two men. Completely taken by surprise at the loss of his powers, Doliver stood dumbly while the big humans snatched him up with their grubby hands. Within seconds, Doliver was captured and thrown into a cage, where the men intend to keep him until he grants them three wishes. The situation is made hopeless for Doliver since the area in which the men have camped is a "dead magic zone" (see end of adventure for details). The brigands are unaware of the clearing's true nature. They demand that Doliver grant them their three wishes or be tortured, yet he cannot do so.

All the while, Cecil is left watching from a distance, invisible. While his foolhardy brother plunged straight into the clearing, Cecil hung back, choosing to observe the humans from a safe and reasonable distance. Upon seeing Doliver materialize suddenly in front of the men, Cecil knew immediately that something was wrong.

Being a smart chap, Cecil put two and two together to come to the conclusion that Doliver's sudden appearance was somehow connected with the humans' campsite. Cecil knows Doliver needs immediate help, or the men might tire of the game and kill him, but Cecil is powerless. He cannot even get closer for fear of being affected by the zone himself. Torn with indecision, Cecil flees the scene, intending to fetch help, though he knows the other leprechauns of clan Treemoss are just as helpless against the big humans. Midway in his journey to get help, he crosses the path of the PCs. After a quick thought, the normally distrustful Cecil decides to risk confronting the party and imploring them for help.

For the Players

You make good time through these thick woods, taking a seldom-traversed path that winds through the heart of the vale. Sunlight streams through gaps in the trees, illuminating the rich earth beneath your feet. Birds call and insects buzz merrily about, adding a rhythmic backdrop to the scene. Time passes quickly as you lope along.

Suddenly, you catch sight of a most peculiar fellow further down the path. Standing only 2' tall, he is clad all in green with pointed shoes and a stocking cap. The little man notices your presence and walks toward you with a brisk pace for one so small, his red beard wagging left and right as he ambles along. When he gets within a few feet, the little man halts his advance and raises his right hand in a gesture of parley.

THE LITTLE PEOPLE

If the PCs make any aggressive moves toward Cecil, he promptly turns *invisible* and flees the path, using his *ventriloquism* spell to mask his escape by making it sound as though he were moving along a different path. For the PCs, the adventure ends here, with the rest of the journey through the woods being uneventful. If the party is not overly threatening, Cecil will proceed with his scheme. At this point, read or paraphrase the following to the PCs:

> The little man steps a few inches closer as he eyes you up and down. A few moments pass uncomfortably before the wee fellow speaks. His voice rolls out incredibly deep from his small chest, speaking in heavily accented Common. "Well met, bold ones," the man says. "Me name be Cecil Treemoss o' clan Treemoss, and I be havin' need o' yer services. One o' me kin be caught by a couple o' nasty fellows further in the wood. I be alone, as yea can see, and stand little chance o' freein' him afore the pair decides to torture him to death. Help me, and yer'll ever have me gratitude and that o' clan Treemoss."

If the PCs decline the offer, Cecil will wordlessly turn *invisible*, never to be seen by the party again.

If they accept, Cecil suggests they head out immediately, asking that the party follow along behind him as he leads the way to the site of Doliver's imprisonment. If questioned, Cecil reveals nothing beyond the fact that the trapped leprechaun is named Doliver and is his brother. Under no circumstances will Cecil reveal the location of any of his kin's homes or their treasure pots. Any question he does not wish to answer is met with a long look into the eyes of the speaker.

Cecil does not know for certain that the clearing is a magic dead area and will not mention any of his suspicions. He does not want to frighten off any superstitious party members!

Cecil Treemoss (leprechaun): INT exceptional (16); AL N; AC 8; MV 15; HD 2–5 hp; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA *polymorph* non-living objects; SD *invisibility* at will, create illusions at will, *ventriloquism* spell at will; SZ T; ML 11; XP 270; *MM*/220.

When the party is through trying to pry answers out of the leprechaun, he takes them on a swift march deep into the glade, along a faint path that has obviously been out of use for some time. Cecil moves with surprising speed, several times getting well ahead of the party before stopping to wait for the slower PCs to catch up. A little over an hour passes before Cecil calls a sudden halt to the group.

The Clearing

Cecil motions for the party to be still and remain as quiet as possible. Once the PCs stop moving about, they hear what the keen hearing of the leprechaun already has—a voice. A deep male voice carries through the woods, unintelligible but obviously cross and threatening. The speaker is Ruben D'Almar, one of the pair of bandits who have taken Doliver captive. Quietly, Cecil tells the party to follow him and be silent as he leads them behind a thick wall of brambles. From here, the party can gaze upon the clearing without fear of being seen. Once in position, read the following to the PCs.

> You gaze into a clearing roughly 30' in diameter, completely barren of vegetation. In the middle of this clearing stands a deer hide tent, hastily thrown together from the looks of it. In front of the tent stand two men, one to each side of a small wicker cage. One man is roughly 6'2" and well-muscled, with dark skin and waist-length black hair. He wears chain mail and has a bastard sword strapped across his back. The second man is much smaller, standing 5'5" or so, thin of frame, with closely cropped blonde hair. He wears leather armor and carries a short sword. At the moment, both men are facing the cage, their backs turned to you so that you cannot get a clear look at their faces.

Within the cage, a tiny form moves about, restlessly shaking the bars of its prison. PCs have no trouble discerning that the prisoner is, in fact, a leprechaun. With a low curse, the larger man pokes a dagger through the bars at the wee person, who jumps back with a hiss. Cecil whispers quietly to the party, "That be him ... please set him free afore the brutes be causin' him injury."

The PCs have a decision to make at this point. They can either try to bargain for the release of Doliver, or they can charge the brigands while the men are preoccupied. Stealthily setting Doliver free is impossible due to the lack of cover in the clearing and its unique nature against spells. If the party tries to bargain, the bandits demand that the PCs show themselves then attack once the PCs are within the clearing. Ruben and Duron are of the mindset that the leprechaun is far too valuable to risk losing or giving up, and they try to keep him by any means necessary. If the PCs charge Ruben and Duron, the brigands must make a surprise roll with a –2 penalty as the astonished highwaymen find themselves unexpectedly assaulted. In the ensuing melee, they will not leave the clearing or stray far from the cage, fearing that someone might slip in behind them and take their prize. Neither man begins to make morale checks until the other is subdued or slain.

Ruben D'Almar: AL NE; AC 5; MV 12; F4; hp 32; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17 (+1/+1), C 16; ML 16; XP 120; chain mail, bastard sword, short sword, dagger, 4 gp, 3 sp, 9 cp (in belt pouch).

Ruben has lived on the wrong side of the law his entire life. He grew up in a filthy city, pilfering merchants of their purses and fencing stolen goods. When he entered adulthood, he became a sell-sword, swinging his blade for whomever paid the highest

Continued on page 69

A train passenger beholds a chilling image in her cabin mirror.

FALLS RUN

BY JAMES WYATT

Den of the Sleeping Wolf

Artwork by Bradley McDevitt
Cartography by Diesel

James writes: "I wrote this module for my friend Paul, who came from North Carolina to visit me when I lived in Ohio. He drove along a nightmare of a highway. Grafton, WV is right around where the B&O would cross US 250. I hope it strikes as much terror into your players' hearts as it did in Paul's."

"Falls Run" is an AD&D® adventure using the *Masque of the Red Death* campaign expansion to the RAVENLOFT® rules. The adventure is suitable for 2–4 beginning characters, including not more than one spell-using character.

Adventure Background

A year ago—on December 23, 1889—a train en route from Baltimore to Cincinnati derailed in a heavy snowstorm a few miles from the town of Grafton, West Virginia. The passengers on the train found shelter in the tiny coal-mining village of Falls Run and waited in comfort among the welcoming Appalachian folk of the village while the storm grew only worse over the next few days. By the 27th, the storm had moved on, and another train was able to carry the passengers on to their destination—a few days late, but none the worse for wear. Except for one.

Edward Gravits, a journalist, was traveling to Cincinnati to be with his fiancée for Christmas. Bored and restless in Falls Run, he soon stumbled upon indications that not all of the folk of Falls Run were as gentle and welcoming as they seemed. He began snooping around and discovered the existence of a secret society of adepts in the village. These adepts caught Gravits and tortured him to death for learning too much.

Unable to reunite with his fiancée, the distraught Gravits refused to leave the world entirely, instead becoming a restless spirit. He returns on the anniversary of his fateful train journey, haunting the train he took while attempting (indirectly) to wreak his revenge on the members of the evil qabal.

These adepts are organized in service to a wolfwere called Jessik. They call themselves the Sleeping Wolf and meet in the basement of the local bar and grill in Falls Run, also called the

Sleeping Wolf. A sidebar later in the adventure describes Jessik and the members of the group.

The PCs are drawn into the adventure as they travel from Baltimore to Cincinnati—on the same railroad line that Edward Gravits traveled exactly one year ago.

For the Player Characters

The PCs begin the adventure in or near Baltimore, Maryland—the Eastern hub of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Washington, D.C. and even Philadelphia are close enough—the characters end up on the same railroad line. Ideally, they are riding the train for a perfectly ordinary reason, such as visiting family for Christmas, but other motivations are possible. The adventure begins on the train westward.

The train leaves Baltimore on Tuesday, December 23, 1890, at 6:10 P.M. From Baltimore to Cincinnati is a trip of 400 miles, with tickets costing $12 one-way ($24 round-trip). With stops, expected bad weather, and other normal delays, the railroad schedules 15 hours for the trip.

The PCs should be allowed to have a suitcase full of clothes and the sorts of items they would need on a trip of this nature. Any other equipment found on the lists in *A Guide to Gothic Earth* is allowable, so long as the player can justify the character's bringing such equipment on this trip. Weapons such as handguns are reasonable; explosives are probably not.

The Christmas season makes this train rather crowded, and the PCs are pressed to find a seat on the train. Whether the characters already know each other or not, they are seated together in one section of the train—in the last of the empty seats. If they did not know each other previously, they have several hours to get acquainted before anything interesting happens.

On the Train

The train consists of three engines (with a huge snow plow affixed to the front locomotive), a baggage car, a dining car, and five Pullman sleeper cars. The PCs are seated in the middle sleeper car. Read the following to the players at this time:

> Finally settled in your seat after pressing through crowds of holiday travelers for what seems like hours, you allow yourself a deep breath and begin to relax. Your seat is upholstered in fine cloth, and the chandelier in the ceiling over the aisle gives you a comforting, warm light. The fold-down bunk over your head is exquisitely decorated, and the well-dressed porters are moving down the aisle with graceful efficiency.
>
> The Pullman cars are ornately decorated, inside and out, and sumptuously furnished. The main chamber of the car consists of twelve compartments of two facing seats, a row of six compartments on either side of the car. These seats fold together to form a lower bunk, while an upper berth folds down from the ceiling of the car. Curtains are pulled around each bunk for privacy. A gas chandelier hangs in the aisle between each pair of compartments.
>
> At the forward end of the main compartment, a curtain leads into a narrow hallway linked to the car entrance. The hall bends around the smoking room and ends before a door leading to the vestibule between cars. At the rear end of the sleeping compartment, a second curtain opens into another hallway, which leads to a rear vestibule identical to the forward one. A door in this hallway leads to a drawing room.

The events on the train are presented in sequence. Time is a more important factor than location while the PCs are confined to the train. Events happen as described regardless of where the characters are at the time.

9:50 P.M. Many people have some preconceived notions about Appalachia, particularly West Virginia. To some, it conjures images of isolation—of backwards hillbillies miles from civilization. These prejudices serve to create the proper atmosphere for this adventure. If you wish to play on them, you may simply note to the players that the train makes a brief (15-minute) stop at 9:50 P.M. in the town of Keyser, West Virginia. Perhaps it sticks in the mind of one character when the conductor announces the stop, simply because the character has never seen West Virginia before. It should not be presented as a significant fact; it simply sets the scene for what happens a few hours later.

10:15 P.M. With all the passengers from Keyser loaded on the train, the porters start making their way through the cars to fold out the berths for sleeping. If the PCs do not wish to go to sleep, they are welcome to retire to the dining car, the drawing room, or the smoking room (men only), but the bunks are to be folded out now, and the lights in the car will be dimmed.

11:15 P.M. If the PCs are anywhere in the car which contains their seats (in their bunks, in the smoking car, or in the drawing room), read or paraphrase the following description.

> A piercing scream filled with horror echoes through the car. A young woman in her bedclothes is sprawled on the aisle floor, shrieking as she stares horrified at the berth beside her. The curtains of that bunk have been thrown back, and a man lies thrashing within, flailing wildly as if to ward off some demonic madman.
>
> The man falls out of the bunk, yet no assailant follows him—just a simple pocket knife, surrounded by an eerie blue glow. The knife rises into the air before your eyes and plunges deep into the man's back! The woman continues to scream horribly as blood seeps onto her bedclothes. A soft gurgling noise escapes the man's mouth as he begins to slump lifeless.
>
> But then the man jerks up and staggers to his feet. Stiffly, the man reaches under his bunk and produces a large box with a handle. Like some hideous automaton, he smashes the box against the floor, causing small pieces of delicate machinery to fly out from the ruined box. After mindlessly crashing the box down onto the floor a few more times, the man gives a slight cough and collapses face-first on the cabin floor. Only this time, he does not stir again.

Edward Gravits

Edward Gravits (ghost): INT high (14); AL N(E); AC –1; MV 9; HD 4; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (hurled objects up to 20 pounds, ten foot range); SA domination; SD spell immunity, invisibility, silver or magical weapon to hit; SZ M (5'6" tall); ML Special; XP 2,000.

Edward Gravits was a journalist and freelance reporter. He was aboard a train from Baltimore to Cincinnati to see his fiancée for Christmas when that train derailed. Finding shelter in Falls Run, he snooped into the affairs of the Sleeping Wolf and was tortured and killed by the adepts and their wolfwere master. As the anniversary of his torture and death approaches, Gravits rises from the grave as a ghost, haunting the train he took on his fateful journey, seeking revenge against the brutal men and women who robbed him of his life and his love.

Gravits cannot simply materialize in Falls Run and bring the members of the Sleeping Wolf to a grisly end, as many spirits would do. Perhaps because of his journalistic background, Gravits is forced to replay the events leading up to his death—beginning with the crash of the B. & O. train. Every action he takes is designed to prod the PCs into doing basically what Gravits did before he was killed, so that they can expose the group and bring them to justice, as Gravits wished to do in life. Yet every action is also twisted by the evil nature of what he has become. He does not hesitate to kill innocent bystanders to bring events about as he intends.

Gravits' ghost is invisible but has the unusual ability to appear in reflections. He can do this in three different ways: He can make his reflection appear in a mirror showing his actual location, he can substitute his reflection for the reflection of a body he is currently dominating, or he can make his reflection appear in place of another person's reflection.

In his reflection, he appears as a tall and thin young man, clean-cut and handsome. His dark hair is cut close to his head, his eyes are deep-set, and his cheekbones are prominent. His expression is contorted with pain and grief.

Combat: As a ghost, Gravits is insubstantial, making him very difficult to wound in combat. Silver or +1 or better weapons are capable of hitting him, and even then his Armor Class is prohibitive. He is also invisible, except for his reflection. Trying to hit him using his reflection as a guide, the attacker receives only a –2 to hit, rather than the normal –4 for striking an invisible opponent. If attacked in this way, Gravits generally chooses to make his reflection disappear.

Gravits is immune to spells that affect biological processes, including *sleep, hold*, and death spells. He is vulnerable to other forms of attack. Holy water inflicts 1d8 hp damage per vial. He can be turned as a wight. Printer's ink actually keeps Gravits away, because of its association with his former life. If presented towards him in a direct manner, Gravits must remain at least 40 feet away from the substance and cannot take direct action against the person holding it. Printer's ink can also be used to create a barrier around a room's perimeter or the like; Gravits is unable to cross the barrier.

Gravits has no physical attack of his own but can use *telekinesis* to hurl objects weighing up to 20 pounds. The range of these attacks is 10 feet, and Gravits must be at the location of the object he's "throwing." Damage inflicted is 1d4 hp.

Gravits also has the ability to dominate a human body. The victim must be dying—that is, at 0 hp or lower. The victim receives no saving throw to avoid the ghost's control and dies immediately when Gravits' spirit vacates the body.

Habitat/Society: Gravits is a ghost with a transient existence. He comes into being on the first anniversary of his death; it can be surmised that if the PCs are not successful in bringing the Sleeping Wolf to justice, he will appear again in a year. He appears on the same train which runs between Baltimore and Cincinnati on December 23. Otherwise, he has no habitat or society to speak of.

Ecology: As an undead thing, Gravits' ghost is not a part of any natural ecosystem.

These events occur very quickly, and there is little that the PCs can do to stop their course. The knife is too small and moving too quickly to grasp. The man is the train telegrapher, Martin Hammond, and the box he smashed was the box relay—used to send a telegraph on the wire that runs along the railroad track in the event of an emergency on the train. The ghost of Edward Gravits killed the telegrapher and destroyed the box relay to ensure that, when the train does crash, the passengers are forced to go to Falls Run for help.

During all this, the ghost is visible as a reflection in the windows of the train—holding the knife as it attacks the telegrapher and in place of the man's reflection as he smashes the box relay. If any of the players explicitly state that their characters are looking around while the telegrapher is under attack or smashing the box relay, they may see Gravits' reflection in the train windows. Describe the ghost to the player using the description in the sidebar above.

The screaming woman, Elise Stephens, had been sitting in the seat opposite the telegrapher and had conversed with him earlier in the evening. She knows his name and his job and the function of the relay, but very little more about him. Elise is traveling with her sister, Elaine, and their cousin, Alvin Stephens, who were sitting in the two seats across from Elise and the telegrapher. Elise had the top bunk, immediately above Hammond, and fell out of it as she tried to investigate the cause of the thrashing in the bunk below.

Moments after the telegrapher collapses, a self-important man with a handlebar moustache rushes from the front of the train to the scene and stoops over the dead man's body. Looking up, he asks, "What happened here?" He is Geoffrey Leecy, the train spotter (a detective employed by the railroad to catch crooked conductors). By this time, Gravits is no longer visible in the windows.

Leecy sets about "investigating" (he's really much better at catching a conductor pocketing a fare than investigating bizarre murders), asking everybody on the car the same battery of useless questions. Everyone in the car saw what happened, more or less, as they peeked their heads out from their bunks.

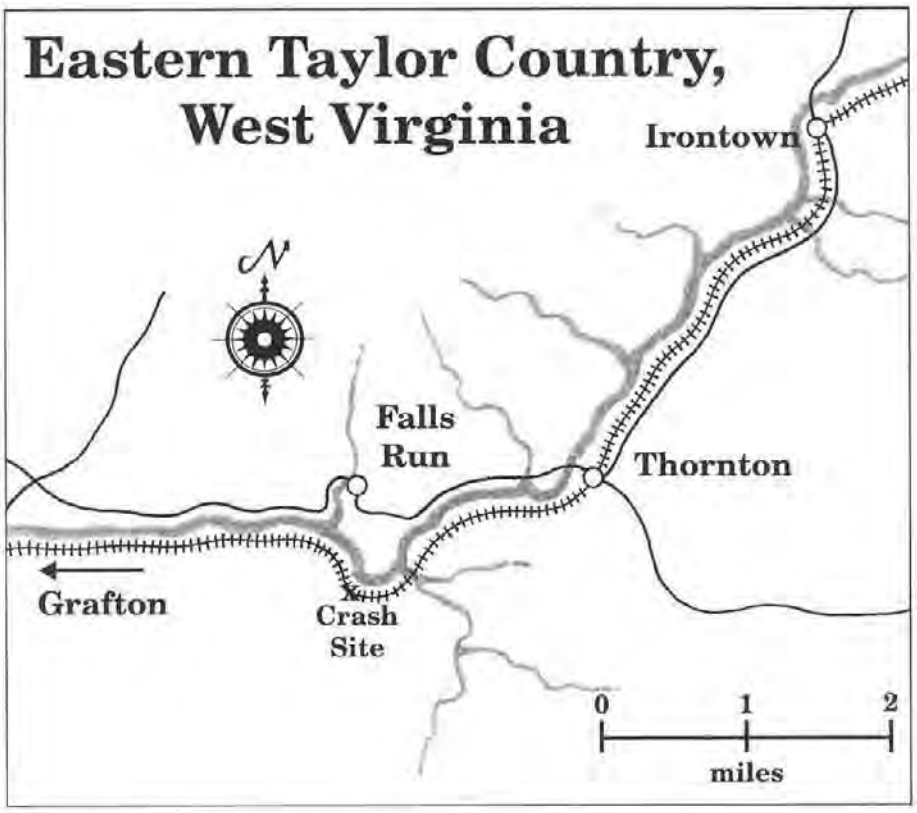
The train has already passed the town of Rowlesburg, West Virginia, and is now traveling through a stretch of mountains with no major settlements. Leecy advises the conductor that the train should stop in Grafton to wire the railroad and take on a new telegrapher. The train is scheduled to reach Grafton at 12:10, but it never arrives there.

11:35 P.M. Edward Gravits soon gets tired of Geoffrey Leecy's questions and realizes he may be as much of a hindrance as the telegrapher: if Leecy were to take charge of an investigation into the Sleeping Wolf in Falls Run, the adepts would never be brought to justice! Read or paraphrase this description to the players:

> It's been about twenty minutes since this all started, and that dolt Leecy is still questioning the other passengers. Suddenly, though, in mid-sentence, he lets out a little yelp, almost a squeal. Sparks and flashes of blue seem to leap from his jacket and hover in front of him, and then you see what has happened: some unseen force has pulled Leecy's own gun from under his jacket and is now pointing the gun at Leecy's head! He stands stock-still, white as a sheet, visibly trembling as a drop of sweat works its way down his nose.

Any PC attempting to wrest control of the gun from the ghost must make a successful Strength check—even if this only disrupts Gravits' aim (putting the character or innocent bystanders at risk). Again, if a player character thinks to look at the windows of the train, Gravits is visible as a reflection, apparently holding the gun. Anyone trying to grab the gun feels an eerie chill around it, but no physical presence.

If thwarted, Gravitz takes no further action against Leecy. The train spotter becomes an emotional wreck from this point on, unable to function in his capacity as an investigator.



At this point, everyone on the car is standing and hysterical. A PC with a high Charisma could help calm the other passengers, and any character who thinks to do this should be awarded a bonus of 100 XP.

11:50 P.M. The passengers are only starting to quiet down when Gravits manifests himself again. Starting at the rear end of the train, in the rearmost sleeper car, things start moving, apparently of their own accord, accompanied by more wild flashes of blue sparks. Read this description to the players as the ghost reaches their car:

> Screams and cries of alarm erupt from the car behind you. In an instant, the reason becomes apparent. The curtains at the rear of the compartment are ripped open with a shower of blue sparks, and you can see the drawing-room door behind the curtain banging open and closed apparently of its own accord. The lower berths buckle with some unseen force and collapse, while the upper berths bounce up and down. The curtains around the bunks open and shut frantically, all the while suffused with that same blue glow. The force seems to be moving forward through the car, throwing loose objects into the air, smashing personal belongings against the walls and ceiling, all amid the terrified cries of the other passengers. Seconds later, the curtain at the front of the car is torn open as well, and doors begin to slam in the forward hallway. Soon the screaming begins in the car ahead, the sound mingled with the terrified sobbing of those around you.

Gravits' ghost uses his telekinetic powers to wreak this havoc in every car, beginning at the rear. In the dining car, the phenomenon is the same, with food and cutlery flying through the air, china and glass smashing on the walls and floor. Any character in this car must make a Dexterity check to avoid taking 1–2 hp damage from

The Sleeping Wolf

The Sleeping Wolf is a group of Underlings (see *A Guide to Gothic Earth*, page 107) serving a wolfwere Demilord named Jessik. The wolfwere has organized this group as part of his bid for power as he seeks to overthrow his Lord, a greater wolfwere called Andrew Warren. Using spellbooks stolen from Warren, Jessik has helped the members of the group learn the rudiments of magic, hoping to turn them into mighty adepts whose power will support him in his assault on Warren when the time comes.

The Sleeping Wolf consists of seven adepts, all citizens of Falls Run. The leader is Bill Cutler, the town's cobbler, along with his wife Jenny (a midwife). Ron Cordingham, the proprietor of the Sleeping Wolf bar and grill, is also a member of the sinister qabal. Ellen Hood (a seamstress), Sue Miller (a housewife), Phil Dexter (a miner), and Joe Walker (another miner) are the other four members. Their game statistics and descriptions are given below.

The group meets once a week, on Sunday afternoons, and only rarely at other times. All the members have alibis explaining their whereabouts at that time to spouses, family, and friends, but some have family members who are less than completely satisfied with these alibis.

Bill Cutler: AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; M4 (qabalist); hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT by weapon; Dmg by weapon; S 10, D 13, C 12, I 13, W 13, Ch 16; ML 15; shotgun or army pistol. Spells: *charm person, shield, unseen servant; scare, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter.* Proficiencies: English language, cobbling–16, forbidden lore–12, prognostication–13, sixth sense–11, spellcraft–11 (13 for enchantment/charm spells), tanning –13. Home: area **8**.

Bill Cutler, the town cobbler, is the nominal leader of this tiny network of adepts. He is a striking man, about 5'8", and quite stocky. His black hair is tied back in a short ponytail, but wisps of it are always escaping around his face, and his hairline is receding significantly. His face is broad, his eyes constantly shifting. He gives the impression of not really paying attention when one speaks to him.

Bill Cutler was Jessik's first recruit into what was to become the Sleeping Wolf. His frustrated aggressive nature—frowned upon in a small, quiet community like Falls Run—quickly found free expression in his work for the wolfwere, and he saw magic as a tool to bully people and get ahead in life. In gathering other members into Jessik's "pack," he has sought like-minded people—people, often enough, without any real power or position in town, people who have some frustration to vent, people looking for an edge to advance their own position at other peoples' expense.

The Cutlers tell their children that they simply go on a long walk up the Run every Sunday afternoon. Their oldest child, Doris, is resentful of the closeness her parents share and often complains about their Sunday walks, among other things. To make sure no suspicion is aroused, the Cutlers always walk up the Run before circling back through the woods to reach the Sleeping Wolf bar and grill.

Jenny Cutler: AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; M3 (qabalist); hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT by weapon; Dmg by weapon; S 12, D 12, C 12, I 17, W 14, Ch 14; ML 14; shotgun or derringer. Spells: *detect magic, sleep; invisibility.* Proficiencies: English language, ancient religion (European paganism)–14, cooking–17, forbidden lore–16, healing–15, midwifery–18, psychometry–12, spellcraft–15, toxicology–15. Home: area **8**.

Jenny Cutler is Bill's wife and the town midwife. She has a much better reputation in town than Dr. Korek, the physician, at least among the women. She is an attractive woman with strong features. She tries to keep her frizzy brown hair back out of her face, usually without much success. Her eyes are blue, and unlike her husband's, they have a tendency to stare—though again without managing to convince those who speak to her that she really cares what they have to say.

Jenny does not share her husband's aggressive nature but is drawn to magic and the dark work of the Sleeping Wolf out of a spiritual drive. She feels drawn to the primal forces of nature and "witchcraft," alienated as she is from the sterile science of modern medicine. Magic for her is an expression of the natural power of life, though she abuses that power in seeking to fulfill the goals of her capricious master, Jessik.

Ellen Hood: AL NE; AC 10; MV 12; M2 (qabalist); hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT by weapon; Dmg by weapon; S 11, D 15, C 11, I 13, W 13, Ch 14; ML 13; derringer. Spells: *hypnotism, unseen servant.* Proficiencies: English language, cooking–13, etiquette–14, forbidden lore–12, musician (piano)–14, religion (American Protestant Christianity)–13, singing–14, spellcraft–11, tailor–15. Home: area **7**.

Ellen Hood is the local seamstress, working with her tailor husband, Peter. Ellen is a plain and roundish woman, yet with a pleasant personality that shines through her bright brown eyes and warm smile. Her long, dark hair is kept in a tight bun, and she dresses simply.

Ellen is a very conservative type, fond of the "old ways" of doing just about everything and very threatened by the changes in society that seem to come hand-in-hand with changes in technology. She tells her husband that she goes to see Sue Miller every Sunday.

Ron Cordingham: AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; M2 (qabalist); hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT by weapon; Dmg by weapon; S 14, D 9, C 16, I 12, W 10, Ch 14; ML 15; shotgun. Spells: *sleep, chill touch.* Proficiencies: English language, brewing–12, cooking–12, forbidden lore–11, pugilism (+2 to unarmed attack rolls), spellcraft–10 (12 for necromantic spells). Home: area **21**.

Ron Cordingham is the proprietor of the Sleeping Wolf bar and grill—the town's only eating and drinking establishment, located where Falls Run Road meets the main road between Thornton and Grafton. In appearance, he is not a stereotypical bartender—he stands just over five feet tall and has a slim, wiry build. His grey hair has an unfashionable bowl cut, rough around the edges, and his dark eyes move constantly. He rarely smiles yet manages to come off as friendly enough.

Ron has a familiar—a tabby cat named Zody. This animal is a regular around the Sleeping Wolf, something of a mascot for the place and much loved by all the regular patrons—as much for its sly intelligence as anything else.

Ron is a wicked man, dedicated to his own material comfort and totally heedless of the needs and comfort of others. He runs the bar and grill strictly for profit and rarely, if ever, extends credit. He is not faithful to his wife and sometimes beats both her and the children. Joellen attributes his behavior to alcohol, but the truth is that Ron does not drink—he prefers to keep his mind completely clear while inflicting suffering on others. He believes he should be the leader of the group, but it is precisely these personality traits which convince everyone else that Bill Cutler is a more appropriate leader.

Since the Sleeping Wolf is closed on Sunday, Ron tells his wife and family that he's going to do some cleaning at the establishment Sunday afternoon. Joellen, his wife, does not approve of this violation of the Sabbath, and that disapproval—combined with fear of his anger—keeps her from ever stopping over to check on him during that time.

Phil Dexter: AL LE; AC 10; MV 12; M1 (qabalist); hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT by weapon; Dmg by weapon; S 17, D 14, C 13, I 9, W 14, Ch 14; ML 12; shotgun, rifle, club. Spell: *change self.* Proficiencies: English language, backstabbing, forbidden lore–8, hide in shadows–12, move silently–12, spellcraft–7. Home: area **2**.

Phil Dexter, a miner, was involved in organized crime before moving to Falls Run from Grafton. He is a big fellow and somewhat brutish in his ways—not brilliant, but not stupid either. He towers above most everyone else in town at 6'4" and could probably beat anyone else in town in a contest of strength (except perhaps his constant companion, Joe Walker). He is also surprisingly nimble, capable of moving quickly and quietly, or of disappearing into the shadows. His blond hair is short, and his blue eyes reflect nothing of what is going on behind them. He is interested in magic primarily to help him pursue less mundane criminal activities, and he has no qualms about participating in the occasionally grisly affairs of the group.

Sue Miller: AL LE; AC 8; MV 12; M1 (qabalist); hp 3; THAC0 19; #AT by weapon; Dmg by weapon; S 9, D 16, C 14, I 14, W 12, Ch 14; ML 9; derringer or improvised weapon. Spell: *charm person.* Proficiencies: English language, cooking–14, dancing–16, forbidden lore–13, musician (flute)–15, pick pockets–14, singing–14, spellcraft–12 (14 for enchantment/charm spells). Home: area **14**.

Sue is an attractive woman and a flirt, but in no way pleasant to be around. She has long blond hair and dresses with a certain lack of propriety (according to the standards of the time). Her blue eyes tend to reveal her disdain of everyone around her, as does her leering grin.

Sue was born and raised in Falls Run but has desires to leave and explore the world. She considers herself superior to everyone in the town—in looks, intelligence, education, morality, and prospects—and acts as though she wants everyone to acknowledge that fact. She has turned to magic as a way of trying to gain acceptance, using *charm person* spells with distressing regularity to make people at least act as if they like her. Her husband and all four children are *charmed*, which tells volumes about the pathetic depth of Sue's neediness.

Joe Walker: AL LE; AC 10; MV 2; M1 (qabalist); hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT by weapon; Dmg by weapon; S 18, D 8, C 15, I 13, W 8, Ch 14; ML 10; shotgun or army pistol. Spell: *shield.* Proficiencies: English language, forbidden lore–12, gaming–13, pugilism (+2 to unarmed attacks), spellcraft–11, taxidermy (mammals)–6. Home: area **4**.

Joe Walker is a miner who dabbles in taxidermy (although he's not very good at it). He has been Phil Dexter's best friend since they began working in the mines together seven years ago. This barrel-chested man stands 6'3". Joe lacks Phil's grace and ease of movement, making excessive noise with the slightest movement, from breathing to shifting in his seat. Like Phil, he keeps his dark hair cropped short, and he is prone to vacant, wide-mouthed stares.

Joe is a follower, doing things with Phil simply because Phil does them. He joined the Sleeping Wolf for that very reason, over Bill Cutler's reservations. Although he is not stupid, he is not thoughtful either. He and his wife Janet (the schoolteacher) are about as mismatched as any couple in Falls Run in that respect.

Jessik (wolfwere): INT 16; AL CE; AC 3; MV 15; HD 5+1; hp 30; THAC0 15 (14 with Strength bonus); #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 2d6 (bite) and weapon (+1 Strength bonus); SA singing causes lethargy; SD iron or +1 or better weapon to hit; MR 10%; SZ M; ML 14; *MM*/363; knife.

Jessik is a wolfwere—one of the last members of a race that used to wander freely through the forests of the Allegheny and Appalachian mountains. Thirsty for power, Jessik allied himself with a greater wolfwere and became an agent of the Red Death. In his growing hunger for power, he is now plotting to overthrow his master, Andrew Warren, and has gathered this group of adepts to provide the magical firepower to facilitate his plan.

Jessik is deeply intrigued by humanity. His race has watched with mingled hatred and fascination as humanity has developed from simple hunters and gatherers to modern industrialists, and some part of Jessik longs to be a part of that development, to learn from humanity and not simply to feed on them. He also recognizes that they possess great power—power that has driven them to dominate the world—and he craves a share of that power. He has gathered the members of the Sleeping Wolf essentially as tools for his own purposes, but he respects the power they command as even low-level adepts. He is careful, however, to cloak his respect behind a facade of hostility, remaining gruff, aloof, and irritable in the presence of his disciples. Even when he bullies them, he is watching them closely, studying their reactions.

Jessik's natural form is that of a huge wolf, standing 5' tall at the shoulder. His coat is grey, but with a brown streak running along his

spine and down his tail. In his half-human form, he retains this coloration. His preferred human form is female, always of great physical beauty. He has no specific forms he uses regularly, preferring to remain anonymous rather than attempting to maintain any consistent human identity. He always carries a guitar (he loves the music of Vivaldi) and generally poses as a traveling entertainer of some sort.

The Sleeping Wolf's Spellbooks

All of these are valuable books to someone who knows what to look for. They are either ancient, foreign, or artistic enough to be of interest to collectors, to whom they are worth perhaps $100. To an adept (or would-be adept), the books are worth much more. Good-aligned adepts would pay dearly for such a book, while evil adepts who learn of the books' existence will go to any lengths to obtain them. Of course, if the true nature of a book is unknown to the character selling it, there is no reason for an adept to pay any more than a collector.

In any event, the books cannot be sold in Falls Run. They must be taken to a substantial city in order to find an appropriate buyer.

Codex Romae: A third century Roman spellbook, the original name of which is lost, this book is concerned with beguilement—holding sway over the mind of another individual. In addition to the text of the spells themselves, the book theorizes about the psychological process of winning control over another human mind, in terms of ancient philosophy rather than modern psychology. This portion of the book is in Latin. The codex is written on papyrus, and the pages are simply stitched together with no cover. Some of the first pages, containing the original title of the book as well as introductory material, are lost. The book is fragile but holds together under very careful handling. If it is treated roughly (stuffed in luggage, carried in a backpack, used as a shield, etc.), it must roll a saving throw of 10 or better, or else some pages crumble to the point where they are ruined. Each time this happens, assume that one spell (chosen randomly) is lost from the book, and the value of the book to a collector decreases by $15.

(1) *charm person, hypnotism, sleep;* (2) *scare, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter;* (3) *suggestion;* (4) *emotion;* (5) *domination.*

On Things Unseen: This early seventeenth century English tome is roughly contemporary with the works of Shakespeare and the King James Bible. It contains a few spells plus lengthy theories about the behavior of light and magical emanations, invisibility, and detection magic in general. For its age, it is in remarkably good shape and quite sturdy—probably thanks to the very heavy binding of the book. The cover is made of quarter-inch thick sheets of wood covered with leather, and the pages are vellum. A small lock holds the book closed; any PC with the open locks proficiency can open it with a successful check at +4, while a character without the proficiency can jimmy the lock open with a successful Dexterity check at –6.

(1) *change self, detect magic, shield;* (2) *detect invisibility, invisibility, locate object.*

Book of Lesser Summonings: This is a modern work by a contemporary Bostonian, written on loose sheets of hand-made paper tied between two thin boards covered with leather. The author was apparently quite insane, possessed of a truly twisted mind. Attempting to learn any of the spells contained in the book is cause for a horror check, made with a +2 modifier to the roll. Only one horror check need be made, regardless of how many spells are learned. The theoretical portion of the book is scant but describes (in roundabout fashion) magical summonings, theorizing a parallel between the functioning of these spells and the functioning of a telegraph, and speculating as to what "wires" the summons might flow along.

(1) *chill touch, find familiar, unseen servant;* (2) *summon swarm;* (3) *phantom steed.*

flying silverware or shards of glass. When the ghost has moved through this car, he enters the luggage car, where a dreadful cacophony marks his presence, with pieces of luggage flying through the air. If the PCs have fragile items in their luggage, regardless of where that luggage is on the train, those items must make saving throws vs. fall to avoid breakage. Bonuses to these saving throws might be allowed if the items are carefully packed. Glass photographic plates, binoculars, graphaphones, and other fragile objects could be broken by the impact.

Following the noise in the luggage car, there is a moment of silence, just long enough for people to start breathing again:

> The sobs and moans of the passengers desist, and you realize that the screams from the rest of the train have stopped. You can almost feel the air move as the passengers finally dare to breathe again.
>
> Then, an inhuman shriek of metal pierces your ears. The train lurches forward, sending passengers sprawling in the aisles, and the steady rhythm of the wheels increases its tempo. The steam whistle bellows forth a sustained note of terror as the train reaches speeds which do not seem possible. Passengers cry out in panic, their gasps swallowed the squeal of metal, a horrific wrenching noise, and a low rumbling that seems to go on and on.
>
> The train lurches suddenly, heaving passengers from their seats and the aisle. You are thrown forward, unable to steel yourself against the imminent catastrophe.

When the train lurches forward, standing PCs must make a Dexterity check at –4 to remain standing. A character climbing over the coal car and into the third engine (another two Dexterity checks to avoid falling off the train!) sees the engineer writhing face-down on the engine floor, pinned by some invisible force, and the fireman lying dead beside the furnace. The train then barrels from the track, throwing everything into utter chaos. The characters lose consciousness, at least briefly. When they awake, it is midnight.

12:00 Midnight. Read the following description to the players:

> It is strangely quiet. In fact it takes a moment for you to realize you're still alive. Others around you are beginning to move amidst the wreckage of the train, and you realize you are not even badly hurt. You were lucky.
>
> Everything seems shrouded in eerie silence. The movements of the others seem soundless—even the flames engulfing the engine seem to burn in silence, casting an ominous glow on the thick clouds overhead.
>
> Then one sound does reach your ears, reassuring you that you still have your hearing: the howling of wolves at a great distance, almost like a heavenly choir.
>
> Outside the wreckage of the train, the snow-cloaked mountains rise up, oblivious to your plight. The snow is falling hard, but towards the north you can barely make out a few lights glinting off snow on the mountainside, offering a hinted promise of warmth and comfort.

Townsfolk come to the rescue of stranded train passengers.

The location of the crash is shown on the map of eastern Taylor County, marked with an **X**. The village of Falls Run is a mile north of the crash site. Grafton is about two and a half miles west, and Thornton is two miles east. If the PCs do not head more or less toward Falls Run, they find the snow only increasing in intensity and the wind blowing right in their faces. Nature seems to be conspiring with Gravits to bring the PCs to Falls Run.

The engineers, the firemen, the conductor, and just about anyone else who's connected with the railroad and is killed in the crash, along with seven of the 120 passengers and two porters. There are eight surviving porters and other servants on the train, but they do not know proper procedures in a case like this. The survivors are looking for leadership, many are wounded, and all are traumatized by the crash. The leadership of a PC with high Charisma, or even a PC with a decisive attitude, can make a tremendous difference here. Such a character quickly finds willing souls to take orders and help calm the chaos. Another bonus of 100 XP should be awarded to a PC who can take charge of this dismal situation.

While the survivors of the wreck are getting themselves together—or as PCs prepare to lead the survivors through the snow towards those distant lights—read the following:

> Looking again toward the lights on the distant hillside, you realize with a start that one of them seems to be moving! A large shape plows through the snow, and you see that the moving light is part of this shadow. Your blood begins to pound in your ears as fear runs up your spine. You hear a jingling noise and the gentle crack of a whip, and you begin to make out the shape of two horses pulling a sleigh. Walking behind the sleigh and its driver are a number of other shapes.

The man driving the sleigh is Reuben Turner. He is leading a rescue mission from the village, having heard the noise of the train wreck. Turner and the half-dozen men with him begin distributing blankets to the train passengers, then lead the way back to Falls Run—carrying the weak and wounded on the sleigh.

> The army of survivors trudges through the snow along the railroad tracks for perhaps a mile. Your feet are so cold and your eyelashes so caked with ice that you've lost track of distance and time. Soon, the white monotony of the snow is broken by hulking shadows, which you dimly recognize as houses. The men lead you toward a pair of open doors from which light and warmth spill out. A sign above the doors reads "Mount of Olives Baptist Church." A crew of women has already prepared some huge pots of steaming soup.

The men on the rescue party are Reuben Turner, Al Fisher, T.J. Miller, Ron Iler, Robert Kranken, Nathaniel Wyatt, and Phil Dexter.

Rumors in Falls Run

You may roll randomly on this table (1d10), or pick and choose rumors for the PCs to hear at appropriate times during the adventure.

1. Last Thursday, everyone in the Sleeping Wolf tavern seems to have fallen asleep at the same time. *True. Besides Cordingham, there were only six patrons—Ron Iler, Al Fisher, Nathaniel Wyatt, and three out-of-towners—and a major fight was erupting. Cordingham used a sleep spell to quiet the patrons and pretended that he had been affected too, so it remains an unexplained mystery. But Cordingham laughs, saying they don't call it the Sleeping Wolf for nothing!*

2. Zachary Butler is a psychopath who would tear small children limb from limb if given half a chance. *Patently false. Butler is harmless. He lives in area* **3**.

3. Ron Iler has shot two wolves near his house already this winter! *True. The Ilers live in area* **1**.

4. Doctor Korek is an atheist. *False. He is a scientist, but he and his family attend a Presbyterian church in Grafton—whereas everyone else in Falls Run goes to the Baptist church. Dr. Korek lives in area* **13**.

5. Larry Lukas is a drunkard. *True. The Lukases live in area* **16**.

6. Luanne Fisher, the blacksmith's eldest daughter, is a girl of low morals. *Half-true. She's 17 and very rebellious, but not* that *rebellious. The Fishers live in area* **11**.

7. Most everyone in town seems to like Sue Miller, present company excepted. I just can't understand why folks seem so crazy about her. It's not like she's ever done anything nice for anyone. But folks fawn all over her. *True. Sue Miller makes liberal use of* charm person *spells to get favors from people, and she never does anything for anyone in return. Sue is a member of the Sleeping Wolf and is detailed in the sidebar describing that group. She lives in area* **14**.

8. Paul Booth, Thelma's husband, ran off last month with a singer at the church's Thanksgiving fair, leaving her with five young children to take care of by herself, with no steady income. The oldest son, Don, is only nine. Folks in town help take care of her, but her people are in Martin's Ferry, Ohio. *Another half-truth; Paul was seduced by Jessik in human form and later devoured by the wolfwere. Thelma lives in area* **5**.

9. The Turner house is haunted. The family has mentioned strange footsteps and doors slamming, that sort of thing. *Probably not true, unless the DM wishes to come back to this in a later adventure. The Turners like attention. Their house is area* **18**.

10. The Cutlers are a strange pair. They always seem distracted when you're talking to them, as if they've got better things to do. Oh, don't get me wrong, they're good people, always in church, and Jenny must have brought every child in Falls Run into the world. *Half-true. Yes, the Cutlers are strange people. No, they're not good people. They are the leaders of the Sleeping Wolf and are detailed in the sidebar describing that group. Their house is area* **8**.

Folks are moving about, bringing extra blankets and cots, and setting them up around the fellowship hall. A festive atmosphere pervades the room. The warmth of the church is a welcome respite from an otherwise harrowing experience! It's not long before someone mentions how odd it is that a train crashed in the same spot exactly one year earlier.

The women making soup in the church are Joellen Cordingham, Doris Turner, Denise Fisher, Elizabeth Iler, Irene Kranken, Agnes Wyatt, Dotty Dexter, May Lukas, and Thelma Booth. Phil Dexter is a member of the Sleeping Wolf, participating in the rescue party only because his good-hearted wife, Dotty, made him.

Falls Run

Falls Run (population 92) is a poor coal-mining community just east of Grafton, West Virginia. Most of the houses are simple shanties with water pumps, outhouses, kerosene lamps for light, and only a single central stove for heat. Notable exceptions are the Baptist church, the Sleeping Wolf tavern, the Cordingham house, and Doctor Korek's house. These buildings are the only ones with coal furnaces, indoor plumbing, and more than a single private bedroom.

Pigs wander the town freely, kept by nearly every resident, identified to their owners by cuts in their ears. Most men and some women chew tobacco, leaving brown stains in the fresh snow. Most of the folks travel the length of the run by foot, sometimes bringing a mule with them for carrying goods.

Falls Run Road, along which the village's houses are built, runs alongside Falls Run Creek (folks around here call it a "crick"), which meets Three Fork Creek just past the main road. The creek is completely frozen over in this harsh winter storm. By the time the PCs wake up in the morning, several feet of snow cover the icy creek, so the course of the stream is marked only by a slight indentation in the deep snow.

The town of Falls Run lies along the creek and a little ways up the hill face to the east. Further up the creek, on its west side, are some coal mines, where the majority of the male population of the town is employed. The mines are owned and operated by the Zorex Coal Company (see area **19**). A railroad track running along the western hillside above the village allows pushcarts to bring coal from the mines down to the tracks along the main road and from there to Grafton, where the company's main regional office and distribution headquarters are located.

The east fork of Falls Run Road leads along winding mountain roads (virtually impassable in this weather) to another road connecting Grafton and Morgantown.

Every Thursday, in the lot behind the church, the town has a small farmer's market, which allows the folks of Falls Run to buy necessities without having to travel all the way to Grafton. Twice a year, during the Thanksgiving and Easter seasons, the church and village sponsor a larger fair that attracts more merchants and some entertainment as well. Unfortunately, several of the fairs in the last few years have been marked by unfortunate incidents—the McCullen murders at the Easter 1889 fair and the disappearance of Paul

Booth at the Thanksgiving 1890 fair. The two incidents were far enough apart that no one really connects them when, in fact, both were the work of the wolfwere Jessik.

The map key below describes the buildings and people of Falls Run. Events occur around the PCs as Edward Gravits continues to make his presence known; this sequence of events is detailed after the map key.

Encounters in Falls Run

The most important buildings in town, and the ones the PCs are most likely to visit (at least at first), are the Mount of Olives Baptist Church (area **10**), the Sleeping Wolf Bar & Grill (area **22**), and the telegraph office, which is located within the Zorex Coal Company office (area **19**).

1. Iler Residence. Ron Iler, a miner, lives here with his wife Elizabeth and their five children. The Iler home is nestled up in the woods on the outskirts of town, so Ron is something of a "first line of defense" against the hungry wolves that sometimes prowl into town, hoping to grab a pig. He's shot two this winter—unusual this early in the season—and folks in the village are a little worried about what that might portend. He sold both wolf carcasses to Joe Walker (area **4**), who stuffed them.

2. Dexter Residence. Phil Dexter, a miner, lives here with his wife Dotty and their three children. Phil is a member of the Sleeping Wolf and is fully detailed in the sidebar on pages 56-58.

3. Butler Residence. Zachary Butler, a miner, lives here. Zachary is mentally disabled and unwed. The folk of the town are apt to whisper strange rumors about his behavior, none of which are grounded in truth. Actually, Zachary is a pious and benevolent soul who wouldn't hurt a flea. He enjoys going to church and wishes he understood more of what he heard.

4. Walker Residence. Joe Walker, a miner and taxidermy hobbyist, lives here with his wife Janet and their four children. A stuffed wolf adorns the front stoop of the house. Joe is a member of the Sleeping Wolf. Janet is the schoolteacher and plays the piano in the church as well.

5. Booth Residence. Thelma Booth lives here with her five children. Donny, the oldest, is 9 years old. Thelma's husband, Paul, was seduced and killed by Jessik a month ago; everyone in town believes he ran off with a singer at the annual church Thanksgiving fair.

6. Schoolhouse. Janet Walker (see area **4**) is the teacher in this one-room schoolhouse. School is not in session during the adventure, and the children of the village are frequently seen running around in the snow, building snowmen and throwing snowballs.

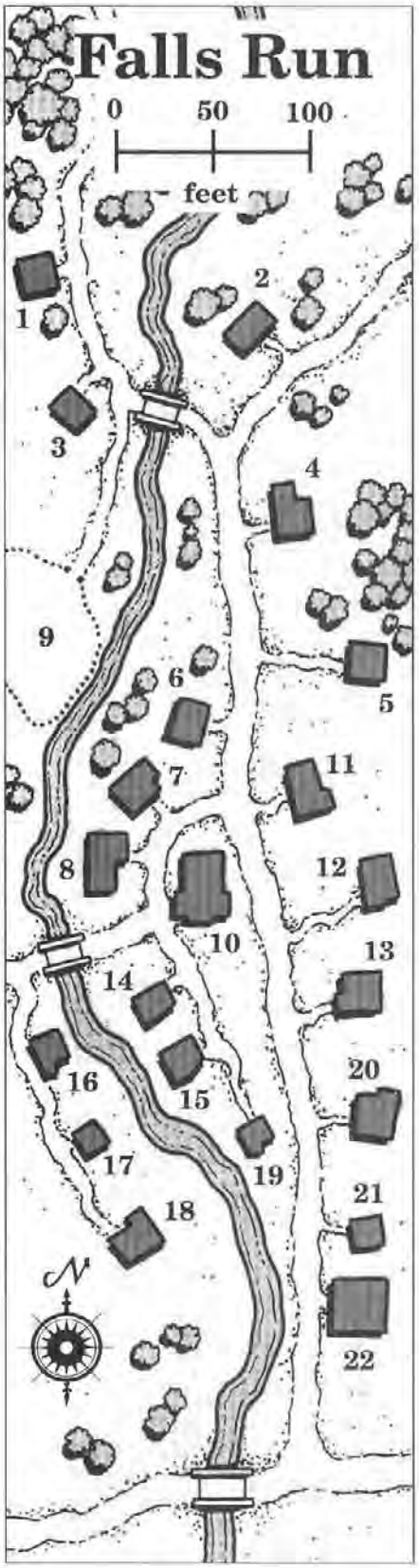
7. Hood Residence. The tailor, Peter Hood, and his seamstress wife Ellen, live and work here. They are childless. Peter minds the church and cemetery grounds (areas **9** and **10**), Ellen keeps the church interior clean and also belongs to the Sleeping Wolf.

8. Cutler Residence. Bill Cutler, the town cobbler and the leader of the Sleeping Wolf, lives here. His wife Jenny is the local midwife (also a member of the Sleeping Wolf). They have seven children; the oldest, Doris, is nineteen.

Doris Cutler is frustrated with her parents, and she's annoyed with the marked shortage of interesting boys her age in the village. Last year, she spent a lot of time tagging along with Edward Gravits as he snooped around the town; in fact, it was an idle comment of hers which first alerted the members of the Sleeping Wolf to his investigation. Gravits told her that he thought something was fishy in Falls Run, and she repeated this suspicion to her mother.

Doris is resentful of the closeness her parents share and often complains about their "Sunday constitutionals" (when actually they are meeting with the Sleeping Wolf), as well as dozens of other slights, real and imagined.

9. Cemetery. This little cemetery is unexceptional. The graves here go back to 1871, shortly after the village was founded. One stone mausoleum



News Clippings

The following tidbits can be found in rifling through back issues of Clyde Johnsson's small newspaper, *Falls Rundown*. They are presented in chronological order, from oldest to most recent, which is probably not the order in which the PCs unearth them. There are three articles, dealing with (in order) the massacre of the McCullen family in April of 1889, the train crash in December 1889, and the disappearance of Gravits in December 1889. The first of these articles involves the work of Jessik, the wolfwere. Note that the report of the McCullens' death is not entirely accurate. In fact, the bodies were found mauled and half-eaten, as if by a giant wild animal. Constable David Wells (see area **12**) is the only one in Falls Run who knows this.

Friday, April 26, 1889—
McCullen Massacre!!
Family of Nine Found Dead In Their Home!

It was certainly the worst crime ever committed in Falls Run—a sign that the deterioration of decency and morals has no longer confined itself to the cities. The entire McCullen family was found dead in their homes this week, their throats slit by some villainous criminal. It is almost certain that some vagabond, having come to Falls Run during the Easter festival, is responsible for the deed. Constable Wells and police from Grafton are investigating any sordid characters who might have attended the fair.

Teddy McCullen will be sorely missed on the Board of Trustees of the Church, and Mary's voice will echo in our memories as the choir sings. The happy voices of Anne, Margaret, Toby, Obed, and Eugene will never more be heard piping up in their Sunday School classes, and even the screaming of the infant twins, Katie and Jessica, will be missed by us all.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth," the Scriptures tell us: "Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." As the whole town of Falls Run grieves these horrible deaths, let us cling to that promise and, filled with the fear of God, do our utmost to bring this vicious killer to justice.

Friday, December 27, 1889—
B. & O. Crash Brings Christmas Guests to Falls Run

No one in our peaceful village is unaware of the railroad derailment which brought nearly two hundred travelers to stay in Falls Run over the Christmas holiday. On Monday night, the westbound train from Baltimore struck a broken rail and plowed into a snowbank one mile south of town. Miraculously, no one aboard the train was seriously injured, even though several cars turned on their sides in the crash.

Church-goers rallied to prepare a meal for the passengers on the night of the crash. The town shared a holiday supper at the church on Christmas Eve. Hopes are that tonight or, at the latest, tomorrow, these good folks will be sped on their way to their homes and families.

Friday, January 3, 1890—
Missing Rail Passenger Stumps Constable Wells

All of us here in town are certain to remember Edward Gravits, a journalist among the nearly two hundred B. & O. train passengers who spent Christmas in Falls Run last week. Mr. Gravits brought himself to the attention of many in the village with his persistent questions. His apparent inability to ride out the snowstorm which held the passengers here for four days was regarded with amusement by many locals, irritation by others. Edward Gravits has been missing since the train arrived from Grafton to pick up the stranded passengers. It is believed that Mr. Gravits did not board the train.

Mr. Gravits' fiancée, Miss Jane Carpenter of Cincinnati, wired the B. & O. offices in Baltimore last Saturday morning, when the replacement train arrived in Cincinnati without Gravitz aboard. The railroad was unable to account for Mr. Gravits' absence from the train and wired Constable David Wells here in Falls Run to inquire. Constable Wells promised an investigation, and he has been busily asking questions in the week since—to no avail. Constable Wells has turned up no clues as to the location of Mr. Gravitz.

Naturally, anyone with information to offer that might help clear up this mystery is urged to contact Constable Wells with great haste.

houses John and Norma Falls, the matriarch and patriarch of the original village. Perhaps two dozen headstones mark the other graves in the cemetery. There are no undead here.

10. Mount of Olives Baptist Church. The town pastor is a mild-mannered man named Reverend Jessup Hawkins. Services are normally Sunday mornings at 8:30 and Wednesday evenings at 7:30. Rev. Hawkins lives in Grafton, where he serves a larger church. Due to the weather, he is not in Falls Run during the adventure.

Beside the church is an open lot, which on Thursday mornings holds the local farmer's market. Due to inclement weather, the market will not be held during this adventure.

11. Fisher Residence/Smithy. The town blacksmith, Al Fisher, lives and works here with his wife Denise and their four children.

12. Wells Residence. Constable David Wells lives here with his wife Rhonda and their six young children, aged six months to 10 years.

David Wells: AL LG; AC 10; MV 12; Tradesman 1 (Detective); hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT by weapon; Dmg by weapon; S 15, D 12, C 12, I 14, W 13, Ch 11; ML 14; navy pistol or repeating rifle.

Constable Wells was responsible for investigating the disappearance of Edward Gravits last year. If pressed to remember the course of his investigation, he might provide some or all of the following clues, though his investigation was ultimately unsuccessful:

- Folks in town remembered seeing Gravits because he was always

asking questions—mostly harmless questions, of course, and the people who remember him asking more probing questions did not reveal that fact.

• Gravits was often seen walking around town and through the woods, as if he couldn't sit still for more than an hour. The people of Falls Run, whose lives are pretty slow, found that pretty amusing.

• Doris Cutler (see area **8**) apparently tried to tag along with Gravits a lot, and she gave Wells some information. Gravits told her that he was frustrated and angry because he was supposed to see his fiancée for Christmas. Gravits also told her that he thought something was fishy in Falls Run, but he would not explain himself any further.

Constable Wells is also the only person in Falls Run who knows the truth about how the McCullen family was killed during the Easter fair of 1889. Their throats were not slit, as all the news reports claim; in fact, their bodies were horribly mauled and mangled, as if by a huge wild animal. The constable made the decision not to tell anyone in town of this fact, preferring not to arouse a panic. It's been a year and a half since that incident and, to his knowledge, no similar attack has occurred, so he feels that his decision was justified.

13. Korek Residence/Doctor's Office. Doctor Howard Korek lives and runs his practice here. His wife Louise acts as his secretary, and they have a toddler son, Thomas. This house is the finest in town, possessed of all the amenities (indoor plumbing, a coal furnace, a separate bedroom for the baby). Dr. Korek is also the only man in town who owns a horse-drawn buggy, which he uses to go to the Presbyterian church in Grafton on Sunday mornings. Some folks in the town don't like the fact that Dr. Korek doesn't worship in the Baptist church, and they call him an atheist. The house is set up on the hill, surrounded by trees, though still visible through the bare branches.

14. Miller Residence. T.J. Miller, a miner, lives here with his wife Sue and their four children. Unbeknownst to her husband, Sue is a member of the Sleeping Wolf.

15. Kranken Residence. Robert Kranken, a miner, lives here with his wife Irene and their four children. Their house was the site of a grisly mass-murder in Easter of 1889, when the McCullens, a family of nine, were slaughtered by the wolfwere Jessik. The Krankens know about the murder, but no details. They moved to the community after it happened. The terrible incident makes them nervous, but they've lived in the house over a year with nothing but bad dreams to show for it.

16. Lukas Residence. Larry Lukas, a miner, lives here with his wife May and their son Chester. Larry is a habitual drunkard.

17. Wyatt Residence. Nathaniel Wyatt, a miner, lives here with his wife Agnes and their four children.

18. Turner Residence. Reuben Turner, a miner, lives here with his wife Doris and their four children. Reuben often plays the fiddle at the Sleeping Wolf and organized the party to bring aid to the derailed train. The Turners believe their house is haunted.

19. Coal Company/Telegraph Office. This building is the local administrative office of the Zorex Coal Company. One room also houses the local telegraph office, operated by Clyde Johnsson (see area **20**). The telegraph office is open only during daylight hours, though Johnsson can be awakened in an emergency.

Johnsson can wire the railroad company at any time—upon the arrival of the refugees, or the next morning—but thanks to the weather, there's not much the railroad can do. He sends this telegram free of charge, but any other telegrams which do not qualify as emergencies are subject to the normal cost of five cents a word.

The coal company agent, Jack Huggins, lives in Grafton and commutes to Falls Run daily. He is not in Falls Run during the adventure due to the inclement weather.

The office has a small printing press, which Johnsson uses to put out a one-page "newspaper" (gossip rag) every week. If the PCs enter the office during normal hours, they meet Johnsson coming out of the press room, wiping black stains off his fingers onto his printer's apron. Because of his aversion to printer's ink, Gravits does not appear anywhere in this building while the PCs are there. He does destroy the telegraph during the adventure but will not enter the other rooms. You may wish to highlight this fact by describing the mirror which hangs on the back of Mr. Huggins' door—a mirror in which Gravits' reflection does not appear.

If the PCs flip through old copies of Johnsson's gossip rag, *The Falls Rundown*, they have a cumulative 20% chance per hour of finding an important news clipping. If they specifically look for reports of the crash a year ago, they can easily find those two articles, but they miss the other one (detailing the McCullen family massacre).

20. Johnsson Residence. Clyde Johnsson, the telegraph operator, lives here with his wife Susan and their five children.

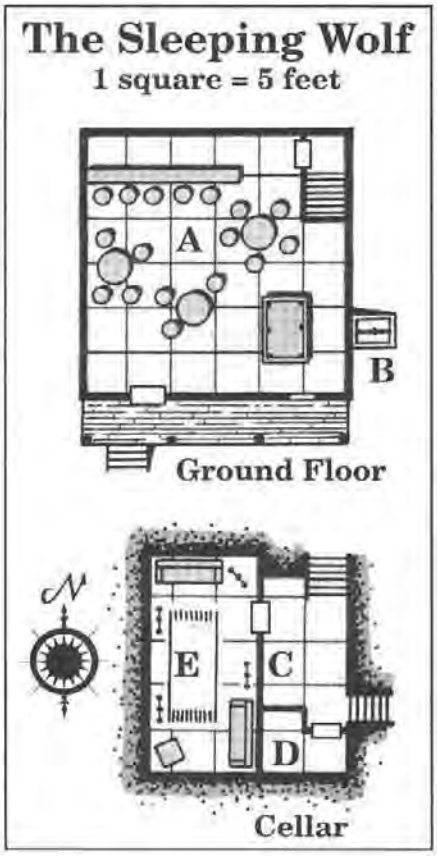
21. Cordingham Residence. Ron Cordingham, proprietor of the Sleeping Wolf, lives here next to the bar and grill with his wife, Joellen. They have three children. Ron is a member of the Sleeping Wolf.

22. The Sleeping Wolf. This bar and grill is the only public eating establishment in town, set right off the main road where Falls Run Road meets it. The inn's proprietor, Ron Cordingham, belongs to the Sleeping Wolf qabal.

The Sleeping Wolf is a square, single story building with a basement and a roof that seems to slump lazily to one side.

The ghost of Edward Gravits appears in reflections here almost constantly if the PCs spend any time in this place at night. Fleeting glimpses appear in spoons, glasses, windows, and dishes. This is particularly true during the later part of the adventure. This is Gravits' way of hinting to the PCs that they are close to unearthing the truth.

22A. Main Room. Read the following description to the players when they enter:



Dim, flickering kerosene lamps barely hold back the shadows in this spacious room. A few men huddle at the bar, trying to stay warm by keeping close together and drinking far too much. Three tables are spread haphazardly around the floor, and a couple more men sit there, preferring cold isolation to warm socializing. A billiards table is set up near the right-hand wall, just below a window that does little to keep out the bitter wind.

One door leads to the basement. PCs may notice this when one of the Cordingham children comes up from the kitchen with some food.

The number of patrons here depends on the time and day. The bar and grill is closed on Sundays (by law), but the Sleeping Wolf group meets in the cellar on Sunday afternoons. During the adventure, at least three men (1d6+2) from the train wreck are here whenever the place is open—from 2 P.M. until 2 A.M. every day except Sunday. Ron Cordingham tends bar and oversees the kitchen most of the time, with all three of his teenage children and his wife (see area **21**) helping out in the kitchen and serving food. Sometimes Ron Iler fills the role of bartender in Ron Cordingham's absence. Reuben Turner often plays his fiddle here, keeping customers entertained while they eat, play craps or billiards, and purchase essential supplies. Ron Cordingham's black cat familiar, Zody, is here whenever he is, though it wanders freely around the room rather than staying close to its master.

22B. Cellar Doors. These doors predate the building of an indoor staircase down to the cellar and are rarely used any more—except when the members of the Sleeping Wolf must meet without going through the main room (area **22A**). If the group meets on a day other than Sunday, the cellar doors are cleared of snow and footprints may be visible in the snow around them. The doors open noisily, immediately alerting anyone in the kitchen. Squeaky wooden steps lead down from the cellar doors to another locked door that leads into the kitchen.

22C. Kitchen. When the Sleeping Wolf is open, the kitchen is noisy and full of commotion as three teenagers and a rather large woman try to work around each other in a pitifully small space. A locked door in the east wall leads to the stairs beneath the cellar doors; another door in the south wall leads to the pantry. Stairs set against the north wall of the room lead upstairs to the main room. A plain blue blanket hangs against the west wall right next to the stairs, partly concealing a door behind it. This concealed portal leads to the qabal's meeting place (area **22E**).

22D. Pantry/Storeroom. Six rows of shelves line the four walls of this room, except where the door leads in. All sorts of dry foods are stocked on the shelves, as well as extra liquor for the bar upstairs. A huge ice chest occupies most of the floor space, making it somewhat difficult to squeeze around to get to the shelves. The ice chest holds meats and other perishable goods. The Sleeping Wolf also serves as a store for staples and necessities; customers ask for what they need upstairs, and one of the Cordingham teens fetches it from this room.

22E. Sleeping Wolf Meeting Place. Read the following description to the PCs when they enter:

A horrific form comes into view. It must have been human once, but its dry skin is stretched tight over its bones, and a clawlike hand is extended towards you as its empty eye sockets seem to leer in your direction.

A fear check is certainly appropriate at this time. However, any PCs who are not sent screaming quickly realize that the apparently undead creature is, in fact, harmless. It is the embalmed body of Edward Gravits, stuffed and mounted here for the qabal's amusement.

Looking more closely now, you can see that the menacing figure is not actually moving, nor is it alive—it appears to be a stuffed, embalmed human corpse. The man's face must have been young in life, his features handsome—though it is hard to be sure when gazing at this gruesome mockery. His cheekbones are high and pronounced, his eyes deep-set, and his hair is long and unkempt. His naked body bears horrible marks of burns and cuts, bloodless now, but certainly painful and gory when they were inflicted.

Now a horror check is in order, as the magnitude of what has been done to Gravits sinks in.

When the characters are ready to explore the rest of the room, this is what they see:

Two heavy black iron candelabras flank the embalmed corpse, and two more stand on the other side of the room, on either side of the door through which you entered. Beside a couch against one wall, a stuffed wolf stands eyeing you. Another couch rests in the opposite corner of the room, facing a massive iron safe. On top of the safe is a stack of cards, like playing cards but decorated with gruesome and

The withered corpse of Edward Gravits "guards" the lair of the Sleeping Wolf qabal.

occult imagery. A rug adorned with a strange, twisted pattern covers the floor in the center of the room.

The stuffed wolf is harmless and not quite grisly enough to have the same effect that Gravits' corpse had. The cards on the safe are used by Bill Cutler for divinations and other occult rituals. The safe contains the group's spellbooks (detailed in the sidebar on page 58).

Events in Falls Run

Wednesday, December 24, morning. The PCs awake to find the town buried in several feet of snow. For the most part, people are staying home, though they can get around town well enough. The mines are closed, school is out for the holidays anyway, and Rev. Hawkins wires from Grafton that he is not able to lead Christmas Eve services tonight, and quite possibly not Christmas morning services tomorrow either. It continues snowing throughout the day, though not as hard as during the night. Visibility in town during the day is equivalent to a moderate fog on Table 62 in the *Player's Handbook*.

A crew of women arrives at the church early in the morning to fix some breakfast for the stranded passengers. David Wells, the town constable, is quick to stop by to greet the train passengers; he is a friendly fellow and spends a good deal of time chatting with many different people. Ellen Hood can be seen doing some cleaning around the place, trying to keep up with the unusually high traffic in the church building. The festive atmosphere of the previous evening continues throughout the morning.

Noon. The folks of town have a covered-dish supper at the church, with enough food for everyone in town as well as the stranded passengers. Plenty of food is left in the church's iceboxes to tide folks over through dinner tonight as well. This is a good opportunity for the PCs to meet the townsfolk and hear some gossip (see the "Rumors" sidebar on page 60). Everyone in town is present, except for Phil Dexter, Joe Walker, and Bill Cutler—all members of the Sleeping Wolf.

Around this time, Phil, Joe and Bill head up the road toward the mines (Phil and Joe telling their wives that Phil saw some wolves and they were going to try to shoot them). They have a planned rendezvous with Jessik, the wolfwere master of the Sleeping Wolf, in the woods near the entrance to the coal mines. They are there for several hours. The men return home after dark, around six o'clock. Their tracks are visible in the snow for five hours after they are made—so the tracks to the woods are visible until 5 P.M., and the tracks from the mines are visible until 11 P.M.

5:30 P.M. Night comes early this time of year, and the wolves can be heard howling again. The clouds occasionally part to reveal the almost-full moon, though the snow continues. Wherever the PCs are, Gravits is there as well. At this time, he is subtle—he moves objects slightly when

no one is looking directly, just so they catch a glimpse of movement from the corner of their eyes. At some point after sunset, during a lull in the characters' activities, hand a note with the following description on it to one of the players:

> You happen to notice your reflection in a mirror. Only the reflection you see is not yours, but the visage of a tall and thin young man, clean-cut and handsome, with sunken eyes and protruding cheekbones, his face contorted with grief.

A horror check is appropriate if the character is seeing Gravitz for the first time. This event should happen to more than one PC, in different reflective surfaces (the lid of a pot, a window pane, a drinking glass or a spoon, etc.) over the course of the evening.

7:30 P.M. At this time, most of the folks of town return to the church once more, this time gathering in the sanctuary to sing Christmas hymns and carols (in the absence of their pastor). Virtually every resident of Falls Run is present, with some important exceptions. The members of the Sleeping Wolf are having a special meeting in the cellar of the Sleeping Wolf bar and grill, their usual meeting place. Several other folks are drinking at the Sleeping Wolf: Reuben Turner is there, playing his fiddle; Nathaniel Wyatt, Larry Lukas, Peter Hood, Dr. Korek, and T.J. Miller are there, and Ron Iler is acting as bartender in Ron Cordingham's absence. Several of the passengers from the train are also in the bar. Louise Korek is home with her baby. Everyone else in town is at church, so this could be a way for carefully observant PCs to learn which townsfolk are members of the Sleeping Wolf.

If the PCs visit the Sleeping Wolf at this time, they notice tracks in the snow leading from behind the building around to the cellar doors, which have been cleared of snow recently. The members of the group use the outside cellar doors so that the bar patrons (including the husbands of two of the members!) do not see or hear them enter the basement. If the PCs ask Ron Iler what is downstairs, he shrugs and answers, "The kitchen and storeroom. Why?"

If the PCs try the cellar doors at this time, they find the downstairs door into the kitchen locked. Ron tries to prevent them from going down via the inside stairway.

The group members are meeting because they are concerned at the way in which history seems to be repeating itself. Last year, Edward Gravits was dangerously close to discovering the existence of the Sleeping Wolf, and the members wish to make sure that it does not happen again. If the PCs have spoken to any of the members in a way which might suggest that they know about Gravits' disappearance or suspect that something strange is going on in town, the group takes action to make sure the PCs do not get any closer (see the following event).

11:00 P.M. This event occurs only if the Sleeping Wolf knows the PCs are on to them, as described above.

Sue Miller, noted for her injudicious use of *charm person* spells, finally puts the spell to good use. If the PCs have put a lot of trust in another passenger from the train or any other NPC, she uses the spell on that NPC; otherwise, she uses it on a randomly-chosen PC. You should select a character run by someone who is an excellent role-player.

If it is possible for Sue to approach her chosen victim without being seen by any other PCs, she does so immediately after casting the spell. Otherwise, she waits and tries to catch the character alone sometime during the next day. She simply approaches this character as a friend and, in the course of conversation, tries to draw out everything that the PCs know about the existence, activities, and membership of her qabal.

If, at this point, the PCs know enough about the Sleeping Wolf that Sue's somewhat paranoid mind would think there is reason to be concerned, the qabal takes action against the PCs the following day (see **12:00 Noon**).

12:00 Midnight. Edward Gravits wrecks the telegraph office—mainly to increase the PCs' sense of isolation and urgency. The equipment is damaged beyond hope of immediate repair; Clyde Johnsson can do the work, but he'll need parts from Grafton to do it. If the PCs have not already gotten information about Gravits' disappearance, you should be sure they can get some of the same information from local sources—from Johnsson's gossip rag (see area **19**) or from talking to David Wells. Gravits does not touch the room with the printing press or the coal company office.

Thursday, December 25, morning. The snow has not let up and is now three feet deep. All tracks from last night are completely covered by now. Visibility is still limited, as by moderate fog. The church women (the same group who made the soup the first night) prepare a massive egg breakfast for the train passengers around 9 A.M., but the rest of the townsfolk are home celebrating the holiday. With Rev. Hawkins stranded in Grafton by the snow, there are no church services on this day.

12:00 Noon. Depending on what Sue Miller learned during the night (see the 11:00 P.M. event), the Sleeping Wolf may take action against the PCs at this time. Bill Cutler, armed with a shotgun, attempts to get the PCs alone and kill them. If the PCs head to the mines, they may meet with a deadly accident in the mine shaft elevator. If they wander in the woods or any other isolated place, they find themselves under attack by Cutler, firing from cover if possible. If they break into the Sleeping Wolf and discover Gravits' body, Cutler is right behind them and does not hesitate to fire on them in the cellar. Cutler stalks them for the entire day, if necessary, waiting for them to be away from others. But the day passes quickly, while the night seems to stretch on for weeks.

5:30 P.M. The sun has set already, and once more the howling of wolves can be heard, closer tonight than ever before. If the PCs have not uncovered the Sleeping Wolf yet, Gravits is getting impatient and agitated. He appears regularly throughout the night, in any and every reflective surface the PCs see. He moves large objects in full view of numbers of people, renewing the sense of panic that

the passengers experienced on the train. The length of the storm, the fact that they are spending Christmas away from their families, and the supernatural happenings combine to weigh very heavily on the wreck survivors. Arguments and tears break out frequently in the church fellowship hall.

Any PC *charmed* by Sue Miller does not see Gravits' reflection in place of his or her own for the duration of Sue's *charm*.

9:00 P.M. While Gravits is getting impatient for the Sleeping Wolf to be discovered, the qabal is getting nervous about the PCs. If Sue Miller was successful in charming a PC or NPC, she visits that character around 9 P.M. She tries to approach the individual in private; if that is not possible, she simply whispers in the person's ear and asks to have a word in private with him or her. She steps outside with the character, where Phil Dexter is waiting to knock the character out and drag the PC off to the group's meeting place. Abilities and combat statistics for Phil and Sue are given in the sidebar on pages 56-58. Phil Dexter is hiding in the shadows, is proficient with the club (blackjack), and has the backstabbing ability, so he attempts to knock the character unconscious first. The character receives a –4 penalty when rolling for surprise, because Phil is hiding in the shadows (–2), and there is both little light (–1) and heavy snowfall (–1). Attacking with surprise, Phil receives a +4 to hit, the character cannot dodge, and a successful attack roll forces the character to make a saving throw vs. paralyzation or fall unconscious. Note that the *charm person* spell is broken only if Sue Miller takes overt action to harm the character. If Phil handles the character alone, the *charm* remains in effect.

If the character is successfully captured, Phil and Sue bring the unconscious PC to the cellar of the Sleeping Wolf bar and grill. At this point, the other PCs had better hurry and find the group's meeting place, or their companion will die. (You can set the time of the captured character's death based on how well the others are doing, or—the better option—allow the PCs to save their friend "at the last minute.")

Bill Cutler remains in the cellar to guard the unconscious and bound PC while the other group members try to go on with their normal lives.

Beyond this point, use whatever prodding is necessary to get the PCs to the group's meeting place. Remember that Gravits cannot communicate except by his appearance in a reflection, but he certainly continues to haunt the PCs until justice is done. Constable Wells could conceivably remember an important but overlooked detail and run to tell the PCs. Doris Cutler could find something incriminating in her parents' room and share the information with the PCs.

When the PCs have their final showdown with Bill Cutler, consult his attributes in the sidebar on page 56. He does not surrender under any circumstances, nor does he flee if the PCs have seen the interior of the group's meeting room.

Justice and Rewards

The embalmed body of Edward Gravits in the basement of the Sleeping Wolf bar and grill is the best evidence that the PCs can acquire, and this alone can lead to the arrest of the Sleeping Wolf qabal. When the PCs do bring evidence to David Wells, they had best be prepared to list all seven members of the Sleeping Wolf, who are promptly rounded up and arrested (Wells gathers a posse to help take them all into custody). If any member of the group is overlooked, revenge is certain.

Anyone whom the PCs can conclusively identify as a member of the Sleeping Wolf is arrested for the murder of Edward Gravits, tried and (probably) convicted. The most likely penalty for murder is death by hanging. If the PCs killed any member of the group, they too are tried on murder charges but are most probably acquitted on the grounds of self-defense. If you wish to make their lives more difficult, it is possible to throw any number of wrenches into the legal happenings here.

The arrest of a majority of the members, including Bill Cutler, lays Edward Gravits' ghost to rest and ends the snowstorm. Within a day, the railroad sends another train to take the passengers on to Cincinnati, and they can spend a belated holiday with their families. If the PCs are not tied up in legal proceedings, they may do the same.

The story is sensationalized in the regional press, reaching newspapers as far as Baltimore and Cincinnati. The PCs become famous for a day, and the town chips in to present a goodwill offering of $300 to the party in thanks for their work. Their fame is short-lived, but it may arouse the attention of important figures in the area, including Jessik, possibly a good qabal in the area, or any other NPCs you wish to introduce.

Since the arrest of the Sleeping Wolf members constitutes the release of Gravits' ghost, the story award for the adventure is the experience award for defeating the ghost: 2,000 XP. Since combat is not a major part of this adventure, it is highly recommended that you give individual XP awards to players who role-played well and had good ideas (for ideas, see Table 33 in the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide*). An award of 500 XP per character is not inappropriate. Of course, if any of the qabal members were killed or captured by the PCs, award experience for them as well.

Further Adventures

This adventure creates numerous possibilities for follow-up adventures in the area or elsewhere. If any adepts escaped arrest, their plans for revenge could lead to further adventures. If the PCs took the Sleeping Wolf's spellbooks, an evil adept's attempt to steal the books could be the focus of another adventure. Of course, there is the fact that the adepts serve a higher master yet to investigate; Jessik could lead the adventurers on a merry chase through the woods of West Virginia, and into many more adventures, until they have gained enough power and experience to confront him. And Jessik is only a demilord—he himself is only a servant of a greater wolfwere lord with his own personal goals. These directions could form the basis for an entire campaign in Gothic Earth. Ω

usable up to seven times/day, though only one can be in effect at a time: *chain lightning, gust of wind, fog cloud,* and *darkness 15' radius.* The thunder children will use these spells effectively against PCs on rooftops, toting lightning rods, or otherwise scattered by the storm. The thunder children can change into *gaseous form* at will and are able to sense the fear of their victims within 120 feet. The thunder children will play upon the heroes' instinctual fear of storms, as well as frighten the cowering villagers and perhaps even fly up and tear free lightning rods that the PCs managed to secure.

Aftermath

Whatever the outcome of the PCs' efforts, the storm moves on after half an hour. With it go any surviving thunder children, along with Portrathos, who slings his satchel of jangling metalwork under his arm and—whistling—moves on to the next unsuspecting town. If the heroes confront Portrathos on his intentions, his past, or his opportune appearance only moments ahead of the storm, the elementalist will admit to being a curious wizard who tracks the raging skies in an effort to bring relief to those in range of the storm. If the characters see through his charade and attack, Portrathos most likely *teleports* to a safer locale; the wizard is no fool and does not engage a group of adventurers in battle unless he knows he can win. He more than likely vanishes like the howling winds, only to return to torment the heroes another day.

If injured for more than 10 hp damage, the air elementalist summons forth an air elemental to level the town while he makes good his escape. Once the wizard has gone, the summoned elemental becomes free-willed and has a 25% chance of returning to its home plane. Otherwise, it attacks the heroes and the village until the storm ebates, the village is flattened, or the elemental is reduced to 25 hp or fewer.

Air elemental: INT low; AL N; AC 2; MV fly 36 (A); HD 16; hp 85; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 2d10; SA whirlwind; SD +2 or better weapons to hit; SZ H (16' tall); ML 17; XP 11,000; *MM*/99.

When the air elemental "attacks" a building, it automatically inflicts 1d3 structural points of damage each round. Air elementals and thunder children are hated enemies and attack each other on sight. Any battle waged between the two is 75% likely to inflict collateral damage to the village unless the PCs take preventive action.

As a reward for their timely efforts, players receive 500 XP for each building that they successfully protect during the storm. This is a tricky task, as the thunder children will do what they can to spoil the party's efforts. For every building that survives the onslaught but takes partial structural damage, 500 XP are added to the total. In the best-case scenario, the party gains 4,500 XPs for saving every building in Lonethistle, plus 8,000 XP for the quartet of thunder children, and perhaps even more if they somehow collar Portrathos and stop his rampaging elemental.

If the town is left standing, the heroes will gain Thornwicket's favor. They will always find solace in the village of Lonethistle. If they let Portrathos slip away, the demented elementalist could menace them again in the future. Ω

Thunder Children

Thunder children are malicious creatures that come out to "play" during violent thunderstorms. These "children" are shiny black, gaunt humanoids with slender limbs and vestigial wings. They have human-like visages, pointy ears, and tiny horns on their temples. Their eyes are pupilless and flash with lightning. Their language consists of howls, booms, and crackles, but thunder children are known to speak Common as well.

Combat: A thunder child usually bites with its fanged mouth. In addition to suffering 2–16 hp damage, the victim must make a successful save vs. spell. Failing the roll inflicts an additional 10 hp of electrical damage.

Each thunder child can cast the following spells at the 7th-level of ability: *chain lightning* (emanating from its eyes), *gust of wind, fog cloud, darkness 15' radius.* Each ability may be cast seven times per day, though only one spell may be in effect at any given time. Thunder children sense fear within 120 feet and can assume gaseous form at will, appearing as small black storm clouds.

During violent storms, thunder children delight in loosening doors and windows, banging shutters, flinging small outdoor objects about, and doing other things that heighten their victims' terror. The thunder children feed on this fear.

Any round in which a thunder child attempts to frighten its victim, the victim must save vs. paralyzation. Failure indicates that the victim is overcome with fright and loses 1 point of Wisdom. If the victim's Wisdom drops to 0, he dies of fright unless a save vs. death magic is successful. A surviving victim recovers Wisdom at a rate of one point every 12 hours.

Thunder children Move Silently and Hide in Shadows, each at 70% ability. They are also immune to *fear.* Thunder children have 120' infravision and can see even through magical darkness.

Habitat/Society: Thunder children lair in little caves hollowed out from storm clouds that have been magically fortified the same way as cloud giant "islands."

There are no sexes among thunder children. They reproduce by flying into storm clouds and getting hit by lightning. If the creature makes its save vs. spell, a half-strength thunder child is born. If the creature fails its save, it dies. Thunder children have no leaders, acting together because it is advantageous to do so. Djinn, pegasi, storm giants, cloud giants and air elementals regard them as enemies.

amount. Ruben is a loud, obnoxious fellow who always has to be the center of attention. He has little patience and less manners, being gruff and blunt. At the time of the encounter, he is fed up with Doliver and is quite ready to begin breaking the little guy's bones to make him cooperate.

Duron Demark: AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; T5; hp 18; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; D 18, Ch 15; PP 60%, OL 55%, FRT 5%, MS 70%, HS 65%, DN 15%, CW 60%, RL 0%; ML 14; XP 175; leather armor, short sword, three daggers, 1 pp, 2 gp, 8 sp, 4 cp (in belt pouch).

Duron learned from an early age that he had a special gift that could earn him a profitable living: a golden tongue. From the tender age of five, he has been using his natural charm and guile to strip others of their wealth while lining his own pockets. Duron is quiet and reserved, preferring not to reveal too much of himself to anyone before he is ready to begin his small performance. He hides his true emotions well. An opportunist, he recognizes Doliver's immense value and has so far talked Ruben into letting the leprechaun live.

Doliver Treemoss (leprechaun): INT exceptional (15); AL N; AC 8; MV 15; HD 2–5 hp; hp 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA *polymorph* non-living objects; SD *invisibility* at will, create illusions at will, *ventriloquism* spell at will; SZ T; ML 11; XP 270 (if rescued); *MM*/220.

The PCs should not be awarded XPs if Doliver is killed in the attempt to release him. If the PCs purposely kill him, the DM is encouraged to deduct experience from good-aligned characters, within the range of 200-300 points.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the PCs have set Doliver free, Cecil thanks them heartily, a big smile on his face. He has no compensation to give the PCs at present, but they have forever earned the trust and respect of the Treemoss clan. The Treemoss clan can be as little or as great a help to the PCs as the DM desires. Perhaps the clan gives the PCs a place to stay, or perhaps the leprechauns collect magical items to give the party when they come to visit. (The magic items, if any, should be relatively minor trinkets, and some may have strange "tweaks" or curses associated with them.)

For successfully setting Doliver free, the PCs should be given a story reward of 350 XP each. Players who acted particularly in character during the session might be given a small bonus of 50 XP or so, to encourage good roleplaying. If Ruben and Duron are subdued instead of killed, each player should receive another bonus of 25 XP.

There are many possible follow-ups to this adventure. Both Ruben and Duron are wanted highwaymen who have small bounties on their heads (however large the DM desires) in nearby towns. If the PCs want to collect the rewards, they must escort the brigands to these towns, thwarting their persistent attempts at escape. If Ruben and Duron are killed, the PCs might come up against the Brigands of the Dark Blade, a lawless group of cutthroats and thieves known to operate in these parts. Both Ruben and Duron are members of this nefarious legion.

Then there is the matter of the magic dead clearing—a small mystery that might be very significant. What event created the dead magic zone? Perhaps a battle between rival wizards stripped the land of all its enchantment. Maybe the zone is only a harbinger of greater problems, with the world slowly dying as all the magic in it is drained by some sinister, malicious entity or organization.

Dead Magic Zones

A dead magic zone is a mundane patch of ground where magic just does not operate. Dead magic zones occur regardless of terrain and are normally undetectable. Spellcasters and creatures with innate magical abilities develop a dull headache the moment they walk into one of these zones, persisting until they leave the affected area. Dead magic zones have no definite size or shape, though the one in this module is a 30' diameter circle.

No one really knows why magic does not operate in certain areas; it just doesn't. (If this adventure is used as part of a FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign, the answer to the origin of these zones probably traces back to the Time of Troubles.) Many sages speculate that there exist places where the weave of magic tears asunder—like an old shawl frayed and rendered useless over time.

Dead magic zones have profound effects on game play. Summoned or purely magical creatures, such as *unseen servants* or golems, are dispelled or rendered inert upon entering the vicinity. Clerics, mages, and creatures with innate abilities find themselves unable to draw upon their magic. This loss, however, isn't detectable until an actual spell or spell-like ability is employed. Spells memorized are not lost in the attempt, as they are never really started. Magical weapons and armor act as their normal counterparts, losing all magical bonuses and benefits, while magical items (such as potions and wands) do not function at all.

Any permanent affects or duration spells cast on a person entering a dead magic zone (such as *armor, invisibility,* and *stonekin* spells) are instantly removed. Such spells do not "come back on" once a person leaves the zone and must be recast. Spell effects cannot be cast into a magic dead zone, stopping just short of the boundary. This includes area of effect spells such as *fireball.* Note that permanent effects that expire instantly are not reversed or negated by the field. For example, a fighter who just had his wounds magically healed would not get his gashes back when entering the dead magic zone. Ω

DUNGEON #65 Contest Winners!

William Allman, Voorhees NJ
Christopher Chung, Corvallis OR
Glenn Crawford, Laconia NH
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Derek Jones, San Antonio TX
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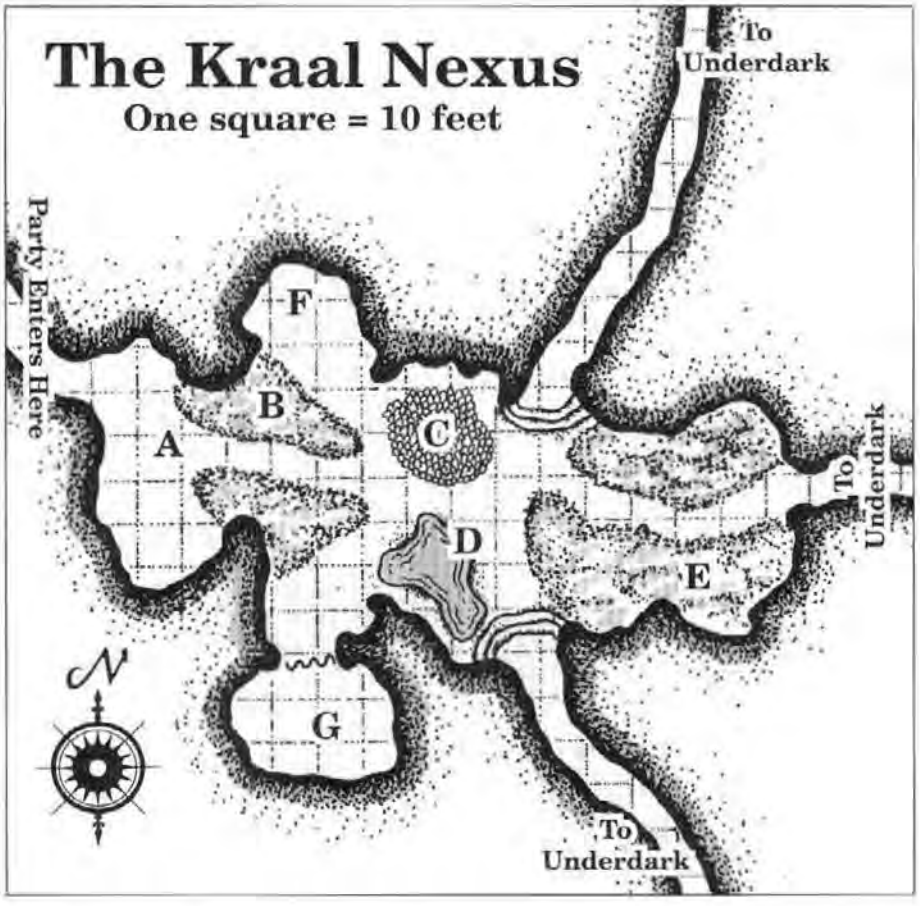

UZAGLU OF THE UNDERDARK

BY CHRISTOPHER PERKINS

A fungus among us

Artwork by Tony DiTerlizzi
Cartography by Diesel

"Uzaglu of the Underdark" is a short AD&D® adventure designed for 3–6 characters of levels 5–10 (about 30 total levels). A cleric or paladin with the ability to *cure disease* would be invaluable to the adventuring party. The module takes place in a large cavern that is part of an extensive underground cave network. It can be used as a side-trek encounter in the *Undermountain* or *Night Below* campaign.

For the DM

The drow, kuo-toa, illithids and derro claim the underworld as their own, and none of them want surface-dwellers exploring the labyrinths of tunnels and caves leading to their sinister underground outposts and cities. These evil creatures use elaborate traps and deadly guardians to keep surface folk from reaching the lower levels of the Underdark.

Uzaglu, an undead myconid, has been assigned the task of guarding the Kraal Nexus—an important cave junction not far from a derro outpost. Uzaglu was the king of a myconid colony obliterated by the derro. He was raised from death by means of a derro necromantic spell and now serves the evil dwarves as a sentinel. Uzaglu's spores have been corrupted by his present state, and he has used these spores to create undead monsters from the corpses of slain wayfarers. Uzaglu's undead, the *hanuk arazuul*, possess a dim yet malevolent intelligence and remain in a state of semi-paralysis similar to rigor mortis. (This occurs when a humanoid creature succumbs to the undead myconid's paralytic, animator, and death spore attacks.) They stand erect, unable to flex their arms or legs; instead, they get about by hopping. This odd method of locomotion can be quite unnerving. Many adventurers who have stumbled into the Kraal Nexus have been taken aback by the sudden onrush of hopping, undead humanoids! These undead creatures attack by lunging forward and biting with their rotten teeth, infecting their victims with foul diseases. To compensate for their lack of limbs, Uzaglu has cultivated a variety of deadly molds and attached them to these "hopping vampires" as an added threat.

Uzaglu

The undead myconid is horrifying to behold: a large, bloated mushroom whose milky hide shows signs of decay. Uzaglu is perpetually surrounded by a 30' diameter *stinking cloud*. Anyone coming within range of the undead myconid must save vs. poison or succumb to the effect (as the second level wizard's spell).

Uzaglu (undead myconid king): INT high; AL CE; AC 10; MV 9; HD 6; hp 35; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 6d4; SA spore clouds; SD *stinking cloud*; poisonous skin; blunt weapons inflict half damage; impervious to cold, poison and paralysis; MR immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear* and death magic; SZ L (12' tall); ML 18; XP 2,000; *MM*/264 (myconid—modified). Uzaglu is turned as "special" undead.

In addition to his stench, Uzaglu can release one of several types of spores, each 6 times per day, and effects are cumulative:

Rapport: As normal myconid (see *MM*/264).

Preserver: These spores preserve organic matter, slowing the rate of decay. The spores forestall the effect of rotting for several months, allowing Uzaglu to keep his undead minions from deteriorating too quickly. These spores do not effect the living.

Semi-paralysis: This spore type causes every living creature within 40' to save vs. paralyzation. Failure indicates the victim is semi-rigid—unable to flex his or her limbs—until a *remove paralysis* or *cure disease* spell is cast. The effect is otherwise permanent.

Hallucinator: As normal myconid (see *MM*/264).

Death: These spores fill the lungs of the victim, causing death by suffocation in 1d4 rounds. A saving throw vs. poison negates death but leaves the victim choking and gasping for air (ruining spellcasting for 1d4 rounds and imposing a –1 to hit penalty for 1d4 rounds as well). A *slow poison* delays death, and a *neutralize poison* or *cure disease* spell kills the spores instantly. The area of effect is a 30' cloud around the myconid.

Animator: These spores allow Uzaglu to animate corpses slain by his death spores. These spores cannot animate bodies slain in any other fashion. Each cloud of spores can animate a single corpse, creating what resembles a zombie (see below for statistics). The spores take over the dead body's systems, putting it to work. It is not truly undead and can not be turned by paladins or priests. Uzaglu's undead minions are unaffected by holy water and religious icons; however, sunlight renders them instantly immobile, trapping them in a semi-catatonic state.

Uzaglu's Arazuul

Uzaglu's minions are called *hanuk arazuul* ("hopping vampires") by the derro because of their desiccated appearance, stiffness, and their abhorrent need to bite people. They are created from slain corpses which Uzaglu has animated using his spores. Most of them are humanoids (hobgoblin, orc, goblin), but a few are human, gnomish and dwarven. The bite of these half-paralyzed abominations is not terribly wounding, but it does infect the victim with a horrible rotting disease identical in every respect to a mummy's touch. A saving throw vs. poison negates the effect, as does a *cure disease* or *limited wish* spell. *Neutralize poison* has no effect. The arazuul cannot be turned.

Animated corpses (24 "hopping vampires"): INT semi-; AL N; AC 8; MV 9; HD 5; hp 35, 33, 30(×2), 27, 26(×2), 24, 23, 22(×5), 20(×4), 18, 16, 15(×4); THAC0 15; #AT 1 bite; Dmg 1d4; SA rotting disease (as per mummy); SD immune to mind-affecting attacks, death magic, poison and paralysis; SZ M; ML 20; XP 420.

More dangerous than their "vampire bite" are the yellow molds, brown molds and phycomids growing inside these foul creatures. Uzaglu has taken great care to keep the molds and fungi hidden in the innards of the "hopping vampires" so that attackers are less inclined to withdraw and more inclined to attack out of ignorance. The DM may determine what type of mold, spore or fungus occupies a particular creature by rolling 1d6: **1-2)** yellow mold; **3-4)** brown mold; **5)** phycomid; **6)** none.

Yellow mold (single patch): INT n/a; AL N; AC 9; MV 0; HD n/a; THAC0 n/a; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA poison spores; SD affected only by fire; MR 20%; SZ S; ML n/a; XP 65; *MM*/255 (mold). Each time the animated corpse is struck, there is a non-cumulative 25% chance that the mold will explode, spewing a 10' radius cloud around the corpse and affecting every living creature within range (save vs. poison or die).

Brown mold (single patch): INT non-; AL N; AC 9; MV 0; HD n/a; THAC0 n/a; #AT 0; Dmg special; SA freezing spores; SD absorb heat; SZ S; ML n/a; XP 35; *MM*/255 (mold). Any

The undead myconid calls forth its gruesome minions.

warm-blooded creature coming within 5 feet of the animated corpse and the mold suffers 4d8 points of damage from heat loss. A *ring of warmth* or *resist cold* spell provides complete protection against this insidious attack.

Phycomid: INT n/a; AL N; AC 5; MV 3; HD 5; hp 10; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4+2/1d4+2; SA infection; SZ T (1' diameter); ML 14; XP 650; *MM*/120 (fungus). The range of the phycomid's attack is 1d6+6 feet.

The Kraal Nexus

The Kraal Nexus is a 160' long cavern linking four passages, three of which lead to deeper areas of the Underdark, perhaps a flooded chasm (see "Swing Shot!" in Issue #66) or an ancient dwarven city (see "Shards of the Day" in Issue #60). The DM should decide what lies beyond the nexus, but at least one tunnel leads to a derro or duergar outpost. The western tunnel leads to the surface.

The floor of the Kraal Nexus is basically flat with a few shallow drops and small rises. The ribbed ceiling is a mere 15' high throughout the cavern—just large enough for the myconid king to move around unimpeded but low enough to limit the effectiveness of *fly* spells.

Although there are many species of fungi and mold growing inside the Kraal Nexus, most of these specimens are harmless to passers-by. (Since this is a major junction used by many underground races, the cave itself is relatively harmless.) Unless the party consists of derro, drow, illithids, kuo-toa or some other recognizable subterranean species, the PCs are attacked by the hopping vampires as they attempt to cross the cavern. Intruders who make a lot of noise or trigger the shriekers in area **C** alert Uzaglu, at which point the myconid king emerges from his lair to help the "vampires" destroy the interlopers (area **G**).

Uzaglu's animated guardians are not fooled by illusory magic such as *invisibility* spells and *rings of chameleon power*. If battle erupts inside the cavern, they are programmed to attack spellcasters first. Uzaglu himself attacks first with his hallucinatory spores, then follows with his paralytic and death spores.

A. First View.

> The tunnel widens, forming a deep, irregularly-shaped cavern. Phosphorescent moss and various molds grow on the cavern walls, and the ribbed ceiling is only 15' high throughout. The floor of the cave is marked with gardens of black peat, out of which sprout a variety of colorful fungi. In the middle of the cavern is a pool of still water and a cluster of taller fungi, many of them with ominous tendrils and outgrowths. At the far end of the cave are three branching tunnels leading deeper into the Underdark.

The gardens of black peat (areas **B** and **E**), and fungi patch (area **C**) and the brackish pool (area **D**) all serve as lairs for Uzaglu's animated brood. However, characters will not see the "hopping vampires" until they spring forth and attack.

B. Western Garden. Uzaglu has left a narrow footpath through this black peat garden. In the garden sprouts a variety of harmless molds, spores and other fungi, all of which have grown to healthy but not monstrous proportions. Herbalists, druids, and wizards in need of spell components can find virtually any type of underground plant growing in this garden, including edible varieties.

The garden is riddled with pit-like cysts, each 4-6 feet deep. Standing in each hole is an animated corpse waiting to "spring" out and take the party by surprise. The "hopping vampires" stand motionless under the loosely-turned peat with just their heads poking up out of the garden. (Uzaglu has taken care to hide their heads behind fungi growths and thin layers of peat.) The corpses watch passers-by through the garden flora, leaping out of their cysts as one or more characters attempt to pass through the garden.

There are eight **animated corpses** (hp 33, 30, 26, 22, 22, 20, 15, 15) hidden in the garden, four per side. There is no treasure buried in their dirt-filled cysts.

C. Perilous Fungi Patch. This conglomeration of overgrown fungi includes four shriekers strategically grown at the southern tip of the patch (near the middle of the cavern) and four violet fungi growing near the northern wall (to keep intruders from skulking around the edge of the cavern). Hidden behind the rest of the monstrous fungi are four **animated corpses** (hp 27, 24, 22, 16). The corpses remain erect and camouflaged behind the fungi until alerted by the shriekers.

The shriekers detect light within 30 feet and movement within 10 feet, wailing loudly at any signs of intrusion. One round after the shrieking begins, the animated corpses spring forth from behind several tall mushrooms and attack. The shrieking lasts 1d3 rounds. The violet fungi only attack PCs skirt north of the patch.

Shriekers (4): INT non-; AL N; AC 7; MV 1; HD 3; hp 20, 18, 15, 12; THAC0 17; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SD noise; immune to mind-affecting attacks; SZ M (4–7' tall); ML 12; XP 120; *MM*/120 (fungus).

Violet fungi (4): INT non-; AL N; AC 7; MV 1; HD 3; hp 22, 17, 17, 14; THAC0 17; #AT 1–4 branches; Dmg special; SA rot flesh; SD immune to mind-affecting attacks; SZ M (6' tall, 3' long branches); ML 12; XP 175; *MM*/120 (fungus). A PC touched by a violet fungi branch must save vs. poison or immediately lose a randomly chosen limb (arm or leg) due to flesh rot. A *cure disease* cast within the first round negates the effect.

D. The Black Pool. This cold, 6' deep cesspool is covered with a thin layer of black scum. Hidden beneath the harmless black fungus are four **animated corpses** (hp 30, 22, 20, 15) which leap out of the water to attack passers-by. These corpses are bloated and water-logged and move slower than their counterparts (MV 6). When they "hop," the flesh jiggles and nearly slides off their bodies.

Discarded at the bottom of the pool is a slightly corroded iron chest adorned with the spider-like emblems of a drow house (House Xak'Vandiri). The water-tight chest is stained deep purple and weighs 45 lbs. A complex, spider-shaped locking mechanism secures the lid (–40% chance to open locks rolls). The lock is also protected by a *Leomund's trap* spell to fool would-be thieves. Locked inside the chest are 358 pp (dwarven mint), four potions (*extra healing* ×2, *flying* and

gaseous form), three magical scrolls written in Drow (*spider climb, chain lightning* and *wall of ice* cast at 12th-level), a clerical scroll written in Drow (*cure disease* cast at 9th-level), a *wand of darkness* (allows user to cast *darkness 15' radius* as a 9th-level priest; 23 charges remaining), *gloves of missile snaring*, a drow-crafted *dagger of venom* (turns to dust when exposed to direct sunlight) and a *gem of seeing*. The first person who touches the gem is afflicted with a magical disease identical to the 4th-level *contagion* spell (see *PHB*, page 155).

E. Eastern Garden. Uzaglu has cut a path through the middle of this black peat garden. Like the western garden (area **B**), this area is overgrown with dozens of harmless fungi and molds. Feeding on a small pile of offal in the southern part of the garden are three cave crickets. The crickets do not attack the party. However, if they are startled by bright light or movement within 20 feet, the cave crickets will chirp loudly, alerting the cavern occupants, burying voices, and making vocal spellcasting impossible.

Hidden under the peat (in the same fashion as those in area **B**) are eight **animated corpses** (hp 35, 26, 23, 22, 20, 20, 18, 15). They leap out of their cysts when alerted by the shriekers in area **C** or the crickets.

Cave crickets (3): INT animal; AL N; AC 4; MV 6, hop 3; HD 1+3; hp 9, 6, 5; THAC0 20; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SD ear-piercing chirp; SZ S; ML 5; XP 15; *MM*/204 (insect).

F. Duergar Remains.

> Leaning against the far wall of this shallow recess is the desiccated remains of a dwarf-sized humanoid wearing tattered chain mail and clutching an ornately-hewn warhammer. Three gems have spilled from the dwarf's rotted belt pouch, and lying on the dirt nearby is a rusted shield. A dull, platinum headband rests upon the skeleton's brow.

This is the remains of a duergar fighter/thief killed in an altercation with a wandering mind flayer. The two creatures were passing through the Kraal Nexus when they met each other and engaged in a psionic battle. The illithid survived the encounter but was seriously injured, fleeing the scene before any other duergar showed up (a false presumption, since this particular duergar was a scout traveling alone). When Uzaglu was assigned to watch the cave, he left the duergar's treasures with its skeletal remains as bait for would-be treasure hunters. The myconid also placed a cursed gem with the others that had fallen out of the duergar's belt pouch.

The duergar's only weapon is a *warhammer +2*. The handle is engraved with duergar battle runes. The duergar's platinum headband is worth 850 gp, and both the shield and the armor are non-magical and badly corroded. Two of the gems are worth 100 gp; the third gem is a *periapt of foul rotting* given to Uzaglu by his derro allies. The *periapt* looks like a dark green gem with an apparent value of 500 gp.

G. Uzaglu's Lair. A curtain of gray moss covers the entrance to the myconid's lair, blending so well with the surrounding stonework that the entrance is 90% invisible when seen from a distance greater than 20 feet. The moss curtain is thick but can be parted or pushed aside easily.

Beyond the curtain lies a spacious cave nearly 20' wide and 15' deep, with a gradually sloping ceiling 15' high. Carved out of the rock in the middle of the chamber is a roughly-hewn stone cauldron. Chiseled into the wall behind the cauldron is a primitive shelf lined with stoppered clay jars.

Even in his undead state, the myconid king continues to produce magical potions from the ingredients in his gardens. However, the potions Uzaglu now creates are largely detrimental, rarely beneficial, and usually intended for his derro masters. When the PCs enter the Kraal Nexus, Uzaglu is busy preparing a bottle of *powder of hallucination* (see below).

There are 15 stoppered clay jars on the shelf behind the cauldron, each containing a potion, salve or powder concocted by Uzaglu. The exact contents are as follows:

Potion of decay (×4): This potion affects humanoid creatures only. The victim must save vs. poison or die, replaced within 1d4+1 days by a fungal intelligence under the control of the potion's creator, lasting for 1d4+1 weeks before permanently decaying. A *cure disease* spell will prevent the victim's death if cast within three rounds of the infection. The combination of a *cure disease* and *raise dead* spell will bring back victims of the fungus disease after 48 hours.

Powder of hallucination (×5): When scattered or spilled from its container, this powder affects all humanoid creatures within 20 feet. The hallucinations suffered by those creatures who fail to save vs. poison are similar to those brought on by the myconid's hallucinator spores (see *MM*/264 for details).

Potion of enhanced fungal growth (×3): This potion doubles the size of whatever fungal specimen or mold it is poured over. When used to increase the size of a shrieker, violet fungi, ascomoid, green slime or similarly dangerous creature, the specimen's hit dice are doubled. (Added hit points must be rolled accordingly.)

Oil of timelessness (×1): This oily salve is fully described in the *DMG* (page 144) and is made from Uzaglu's preserver spores.

Paralytic goo (×2): Made from Uzaglu's semi-paralytic spores, this gelatinous substance can be applied to arrow tips and other weapons, duplicating the effects of the myconid's spores. Each jar has enough goo for 2d6 applications.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs pass through the Kraal Nexus without succumbing to the perils within, the adventure is completed and the party may continue its exploration of the Underdark. Uzaglu's *hanuk arazuul* pursue prey beyond the confines of the Kraal Nexus, but the undead myconid does not. Uzaglu never travels far from his lair, fighting to the death (if necessary) to guard the cavern against incursors. If Uzaglu and his rotten minions are destroyed, the derro learn of this within one month and find a suitable replacement to guard the cavern. Meanwhile, derro warbands keep their eyes open, looking for the trespassers who violated the nexus cavern. Ω